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BOHEMIA. 1866

CAMPAIGNS AND THEIR LESSONS

EDITED BY COLONEL C. E. CALLWELL, C.B.

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CAMPAIGNS AND THEIR LESSONS

EDITED BY COLONEL C. E. CALLWELL, C.B.

BOHEMIA. 1866

BY

LIEUT.-COL. NEILL MALCOLM, D.S.O.

WITH FOUR MAPS

LONDON

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INTRODUCTION

THE Austro-Prussian conflict of 1866 was so immediately and completely eclipsed by the far greater events of 1870, that for many years its study was neglected, and even now its bibliography is remarkably small. Nevertheless it is a campaign of great importance. It was then that von Moltke demonstrated for the first time those theories of war which were afterwards embodied in his now famous *Memorandum for the Guidance of Superior Officers*. Those theories formed the basis of the strategy of 1866, 1870, and of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5; they also form the basis upon which the handling of German armies is founded to-day. Nevertheless they are still the subjects of heated controversy. Throughout the earlier part of the campaign the strategical weakness of an invasion along separate lines was apparent in a very marked degree, and by no one was it appreciated more clearly than by von Moltke; in the culminating battle of Königgrätz the tactical strength of a converging attack was exemplified no less strongly. It is clear, therefore, if indeed proof be needed, that it is during the earlier stages of a campaign that armies operating from different bases are most vulnerable.

But to take advantage of this weakness it is necessary that an army acting upon interior lines should be highly organized, very mobile, and above everything that it should be imbued with the offensive spirit. Therein lies the danger of the interior position. To a feeble commander there is always the temptation to wait too long before striking at the divided forces of his foe. He is inclined to wait for his enemy to make a mistake rather than to force him to do so ; to wait for opportunities rather than to make them. He allows his zone of manœuvre to become more and more restricted, watches the vice gradually closing in upon him, and finally relies upon a purely tactical defensive, as did von Benedek at Königgrätz and Kuropatkin at Liao-yang. That is the difference between Napoleon, or even Lee, and their successors von Benedek, Bazaine, and Kuropatkin. In the past great successes have been won by armies acting upon exterior lines ; successes even more striking have been won by armies acting upon interior lines ; but in almost every case it has been the spirit of the offensive which has decided the issue. 1814, 1815, and the American Civil War may be quoted in contradiction of this statement, but in all three campaigns both sides were animated with the same spirit, and the numbers engaged were so disproportionate that the only cause for wonder is that the side which was ultimately defeated was able to accomplish so much as it did. It was not only von Moltke's system of warfare which crushed Austria in 1866 and France in 1870, it was also the superiority of his peace organization which gave him the

initiative ; which enabled him to dominate his opponents from first to last. More than all it was his character as a man.

There was, moreover, one further reason for Austria's almost unbroken series of defeats. Her troops were ill-organized, moderately commanded, and badly armed. For this last defect there can be no excuse. No nation can be sure of possessing a von Moltke in the hour of need ; but it can at least be certain that its troops are at no disadvantage in the matter of arms. Time after time during this war the Austrian battalions were beaten simply because the Prussian breech-loader was so immensely superior to the muzzle-loading weapon with which they themselves were armed. This was a defect for which the commander in the field was not to blame. Admitted that he was not a great general, he should at least be treated with consideration, for he had to contend with great and unnecessary difficulties. In one way only could he have equalized armament, and that was by operating under cover of darkness. But night operations require much practice and highly skilled control ; moreover, they too postulate that spirit of offence which was so conspicuously lacking. With all his faults von Benedek had one great gift, for even at the last his troops were devoted to him and were prepared to follow him anywhere. Unlike the uninstructed populace of Vienna who demanded a scapegoat, the army which had been defeated again and again remained stanchly loyal to its commander, and is loyal to his memory still.

The principal authorities upon which this short sketch of the war is founded are, of course, the official accounts. References to the Prussian account are to the English version published by the War Office; and those to the Austrian account are to the French translation by F. Crousse, published in Brussels, 1868-9.

Of unofficial accounts of the war, by far the most important in the English language is Mr. C. F. Atkinson's admirable translation of General H. Bonnal's *Sadowa*, which, however, treats the war almost entirely from the Prussian side. In addition to his masterly analysis of the movements, General Bonnal has prepared an excellent series of maps, both of the campaign and of the final battle, which are of the greatest value to the student. *The Seven Weeks' War*, by F. M. Hozier, also contains much useful information, which has the great advantage of having been acquired by the author at first hand. Then there is Major-General von Lettow-Vorbeck's *Der Feldzug in Böhmen*, which has not yet been translated into English. Should the student wish to work out any particular phase of the campaign in greater detail than is to be found in any of these works, there is at the end of General Bonnal's work a very complete bibliography compiled by the translator.

Lastly a word as to place-names. Various methods of transliteration have arrived at such widely different results, as, for instance, as Gitschin and Jiçin, both of which represent the name of the same village, that much confusion is apt to result. Although the spelling adopted by the

official accounts is free from any pedantic adherence to system, both are equally unsuccessful in conveying to English eyes the correct local pronunciation. That employed in the English version of the Prussian history has been adhered to as far as possible, and every effort has been made to make letterpress and maps agree.

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CAMPAIGNS AND THEIR LESSONS

BOHEMIA. 1866

CHAPTER I

THE PRELIMINARIES OF WAR

Cause of the War.—The Austro-Prussian War of 1866 forms an important link in the chain of events leading to the unification of the German nation. For many years the feeling had been growing that if the German-speaking peoples were ever to take their proper place in the councils of the world, some one power must take the lead. The principle of unification was almost universally accepted, but, to quote the Prussian official history of the war, “neither were the princes prepared to sacrifice their rights nor the peoples their peculiarities.” An attempt to establish a confederation of the thirty odd states proved a failure, and in certain quarters the view was held that without compulsion the jealousies of the minor sovereignties must prove an insuperable obstacle to progress. The only question was, Who was to have the right to bring the necessary pressure to bear upon the recalcitrant members of the confederacy? Only two states were strong enough to lay claim to that privilege. All the weight of tradition was with Austria as the historic head of the Holy Roman Empire; but for more than a hundred and fifty years Prussia had been steadily organizing her resources with the

definite intention of building up a central European power which should be strong enough to curb the ambitions of France and Russia alike. The battle of Jena had temporarily shattered these aspirations, but in the hour of her great need Prussia found men who had the strength and the ability to reconstruct her fortunes. After Jena Napoleon insisted, as a condition of peace, that the Prussian army should not exceed 42,000 men, and in so doing he thought that he had imposed terms which would ensure the permanent humiliation of his enemy. He never made a greater mistake. The genius of Scharnhorst evolved a system by which, while keeping strictly within the letter of the treaty, its spirit was evaded. Tens of thousands of young men were passed rapidly through the ranks into the reserve, and upon the ruins of Frederick the Great's army was erected the powerful military fabric which crushed Austria in 1866, humbled France in 1870-1, and which has since been developed into the most perfect military machine which the world has ever seen. On the one hand, therefore, was an old aristocratic state, with centuries of tradition behind it; on the other hand was a young and ambitious kingdom, conscious of its growing power, and waiting only for the proper moment to take the next step towards the headship of the German races. It was the rivalry between Austria and Prussia which enabled the minor sovereignties to preserve their independence and to follow their own somewhat selfish ends.

The makers of Germany.—Such a state of affairs could not last indefinitely; but Prussian statesmen were far too wise to press their diplomacy ahead of their military preparedness. In 1850 the dispute with regard to the control of the Elbe Duchies, Schleswig and Holstein, brought Austria and Prussia to the verge of a war which

was only averted by the treaty of Olmütz ; but although this convention averted war for the time being, it left untouched the real question, which was whether Austria was to continue to dominate the counsels of Germany. It has been suggested that Prussia's ready acquiescence in the terms of this convention was due to the failure of her mobilization arrangements. Whether this was or was not the only cause is immaterial. The important point is that many defects were laid bare, and that so soon as Prince William, the future King and Emperor, became Regent in 1860, he with the assistance of Roon and von Moltke inaugurated a scheme for the thorough reorganization of the military forces.

Even from a purely military study it is impossible to omit all reference to the name of the great statesman who for so many years guided the national policy of Prussia ; but Bismarck's share in the meteoric rise of his country needs no more than passing mention. His reputation and abilities are beyond dispute. Lastly there is Manteuffel, who as Chief of the Military Cabinet of the King was responsible for the selection of officers for the higher commands and more important appointments. Seldom, indeed, has a ruler had the good fortune to find such assistants ready to his hand, but so far as the war of 1866 is concerned all names are overshadowed by that of the Chief of the General Staff.

Von Moltke.—Helmuth Charles Bernard von Moltke was born in the year 1800 at the little town of Parchim, in Mecklenburg. When only twenty-two years old he was attached to the Prussian Staff College in Berlin. At that time the war training was very real, for Europe had not had time to forget the experiences of the Napoleonic era, and Clausewitz himself is said to have been one of the lecturers from whom von Moltke received his earliest training.

So highly was he thought of that after leaving the college he was employed almost continually on the staff, and in 1835 he was selected for the post of military adviser to the Sultan of Turkey. His experiences in the East were not happy, and it must have been with little regret that he returned to his own country in 1840. His promotion was far from rapid, but at the age of forty-eight he was appointed chief of the staff of the 4th Corps, which was then commanded by the Crown Prince. The success of von Moltke's military career was now assured, at least so far as peace advancement was concerned ; but no soldier can be pronounced happy until he has proved his capacity on the battlefield, and von Moltke was not to have the opportunity of doing so until he was long past the age at which most great commanders have won their reputations. At last, in 1858, when his corps commander had become Regent, von Moltke was appointed Chief of the General Staff ; and from the day of that appointment may be fitly dated, not only the regeneration of the Prussian army, but also the modern scientific study of the art of war which has penetrated even so far east as Japan, with what results we all know.

Like his royal master, von Moltke was a firm believer in the union of the German peoples with Prussia at their head ; and in common with his fellow-countrymen he had felt deeply the diplomatic reverse at Olmütz. If Prussia was ever to lead the German people he knew that her army must first be made thoroughly efficient. Under his guidance the strength of the standing army, including the reserve, was increased from 200,000 to 400,000 men, and the period of service was extended from five to seven years. An even more important reform was the complete separation of the regular army from the Landwehr. Hitherto the men of the Landwehr had been reckoned upon to take their

place in the front line immediately upon the outbreak of hostilities; but, principally owing to the experience of 1850, that system was now abandoned and the Landwehr troops were told off for the lines of communication and to form the second line.

The Convention of Gastein.—The joint execution by Austria and Prussia against Denmark in 1864 afforded von Moltke some opportunity for testing his new arrangements; and it also afforded him the even more valuable opportunity of obtaining an insight into the working of the Austrian mobilization. Such an experience was not likely to be wasted. The omens were favourable, and a pretext for a quarrel was easily found. By the Convention of Gastein, 1865, it had been agreed that, while the principle of co-possession was to be maintained, Austria was to have the administration of Holstein and Prussia was to be responsible for that of Schleswig. Some differences of method were certain to arise, and before long Prussia thought it necessary to remonstrate with the Cabinet of Vienna on account of an agitation which had sprung up in Holstein with regard to the government of Schleswig. The first of a series of diplomatic exchanges took place on the 26th January, 1866, and as the answer was considered unsatisfactory, a council, at which the Chief of the General Staff was present, was held at Berlin on the 28th February, under the presidency of the King. Ten days later a similar council in Vienna was attended by General von Benedek. For the next few weeks the exchange of diplomatic notes went on, each country striving to throw the onus of a breach upon the other and to make its own intentions and actions appear to be purely pacific and defensive.

Military preparations.—Meanwhile military preparations were quietly begun by both parties. A proposal by Count

Mensdorf for a mutual suspension of these threatening measures was agreed to by the Prussian statesmen ; but no serious effort was made on either side honestly to carry out the undertaking, and towards the end of April it became clear to Austria that Italy also was making ready for war. This new danger entailed fresh precautions which were, probably perfectly honestly, interpreted in Prussia as a renewed threat. On the 3rd May, orders were issued from Berlin for the mobilization of the whole of the cavalry of the line and of all the artillery, as well as of the infantry of the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Army Corps ; that is to say, of the corps nearest to the Austrian frontier. By the 12th May the whole of the Prussian field army had been called out, and before the end of the month the garrisons of the fortresses had been placed on a war footing. These preparations were directed, not only against Austria, but also against certain of the minor states, particularly Saxony, Bavaria, and Würtemberg, which were more than likely to throw in their lot with the traditional head of the German Confederation. Meanwhile diplomatic negotiations with regard to the Duchies still made some pretence of an effort to avoid the necessity of war ; but it had come to be recognized that by no other means could the real question at issue be settled.

The outbreak of war.—On the 1st June, Austria announced that the settlement of the Elbe Duchies dispute must be entrusted to the Germanic Confederation. This step, which was possibly not very sincere, was met by Prussia with a declaration that she considered that Austria had broken the Convention of Gastein, and that henceforth Prussia claimed the right of dual control over both Schleswig and Holstein, as established by the Treaty of Vienna. Nevertheless the Austrian Governor of Holstein, acting by the desire of his Government, summoned the

estates of the Duchy to meet on the 11th June. This summons was issued on the 5th. On the following day General von Manteuffel demanded that it should be recalled, but as the answer was unsatisfactory, he crossed the frontier on the 7th at the head of a force of 12,000 men. The Austrian force in Holstein, hardly 5000 strong, was quite unable to oppose this inroad, and retired first to Altona and then to Hamburg, whence the troops were entrained, on the 12th June, for Southern Germany. At this time the Diet was in session at Frankfort, and the Austrian Government promptly demanded from the representatives of the various states of the Confederation a declaration against Prussia. On the 14th the motion was carried by nine votes against six; Bavaria, Saxony, Hanover, and the two Hesses siding with Austria. The inevitable had come to pass. War between the two principal German Powers broke out on the 15th June, and at midnight of the 16th and 17th the Prussian representatives at Dresden, Hanover, and Cassel declared war with the states to which they were accredited.

CHAPTER II

MILITARY PREPARATIONS

MAP 1

Prussian mobilization.—During the Napoleonic wars Prussian diplomacy had earned an unenviable reputation for vacillation and shiftiness ; but in the stronger hands which held the reins of government in the middle of the nineteenth century there was no trace of feebleness. The policy of the state was directed towards a definite goal. If that end could be achieved without going to war, well and good ; if not, then the responsible statesmen were prepared for the inevitable. Step by step military preparations kept pace with diplomatic negotiations, and by the 8th May the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 8th Corps had been placed upon a war footing.

At this date there was still much uncertainty in Berlin as to the proper distribution of these troops. It was known that the Austrian army was organized in ten corps, of which the 5th, 7th, and 9th were being concentrated against Italy ; but the destination of the remaining seven corps and the attitude of the southern states as well as of Hanover and Hesse Cassel were doubtful. In these circumstances it was found to be impossible to decide upon the points at which the troops would be required on the outbreak of war, and, as a temporary measure only, they were ordered on the 3rd May to assemble as follows :—

6th Corps	Neisse
5th Corps	Schweidnitz
8th Corps	Coblentz (on the Rhine)
3rd and 4th Corps	Torgau and Kottbus

Of the last corps, however, the 8th Division remained for a time at Erfurt, and the 32nd Brigade was concentrated at Wetzlar.¹ A few days later the Guard Corps was ordered to assemble at Berlin, where it formed a strategical reserve ; the 2nd Corps was massed at Kustrin ; and the 13th and 14th Divisions, which together formed the 7th Corps, were mobilized near Munster¹ and Minden¹ respectively. Thus each corps was to concentrate, as a preliminary measure, in or near its own recruiting area instead of on the frontier. The great disadvantage of this arrangement became apparent so soon as the political situation developed sufficiently to put the hostile attitude of the minor states beyond doubt. By the 15th May it was apparent, even to the most sanguine, that Prussia must be prepared to fight almost single-handed against the armed strength of the Confederacy. It was then estimated that the forces by which she might be opposed would be :—

Northern Germany (Hanover and Hesse Cassel)	36,000 men
Southern Germany (Bavaria, Würtem- berg, and Hesse Darmstadt)	100,000 „
Austria and Saxony	264,000 „

Neither the first nor the second of these groups was considered to be a formidable enemy. Numerically they were of some importance, and geographically Hanover and Hesse Cassel were so placed that they could sever the communications of Prussia with the Rhine and the Elbe

¹ To the west and north-west of the area included in Map 1.

Duchies. Nevertheless the absence of any centralized control, and the inefficiency of the general organization, judged by Prussian standards, were considered to detract very greatly from the offensive power of these states. The key to the whole strategical position was, therefore, the third group, of which the Austrian army provided some 240,000 men. A victory in this quarter would paralyse all other enemies, and with that object in view the King of Prussia, who had assumed the supreme command, organized his corps into four armies, three of which were to be directed upon the primary theatre of operations, while one only, and that the weakest, was to operate in the secondary theatre.

Secondary operations.—The task of subduing and disarming the minor states was entrusted to General Vogel von Falkenstein and the “Army of the Maine,” a convenient name for a composite force in which were included the 13th Division of the 7th Corps, the 32nd Infantry Brigade suddenly expanded into a division, another division from Holstein, and various contingents from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Oldenburg, the Hanse towns, and other places. Weak as it was in many ways, this heterogeneous force proved quite equal to the demands which were made upon it. The Hanoverian army was defeated at Langensalza on the 27th June, and surrendered unconditionally two days later; that is, in exactly two weeks after the outbreak of war. The operations in Western Germany were of longer duration, and consisted of a series of comparatively minor actions, which lasted until the end of July, by which date the Army of the Maine had occupied almost the whole of the hostile territory and was in a position to dictate the terms of peace. These secondary operations are fully described in the Prussian official history, and no further reference will be made to them in

this volume, which is concerned solely with the campaign in Bohemia.

The main operations.—The troops which were to take the field against Austria and Saxony were organized as follows :—

1st Army, under Prince Frederick Charles : Guard,¹ 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Corps. To assemble in Lausitz.

2nd Army, under the Crown Prince of Prussia : 5th and 6th Corps. To assemble in Lower Silesia.

The Army of the Elbe, under General Herwath von Bittenfeld : 8th Corps and 14th Division of the 7th Corps. To assemble in Prussian Saxony.

In addition to the corps which were allotted to one or other of the above armies, the 1st Corps was placed at Görlitz to maintain connexion between the forces under Prince Frederick Charles and the Crown Prince.

In order to carry out this strategic concentration, it was first necessary temporarily to break up the corps formations, with the result that an immense amount of labour was duplicated and much time was wasted. This error, which was excused at the time on political grounds, was not repeated in 1870, nor is it likely to occur again in any German army. Nevertheless both mobilization and transport were carried out in a manner which was far in advance of anything previously known in Europe, and in twenty-one days, between the 16th May and the 5th June, 197,000 men, 55,000 horses, and 5300 vehicles were conveyed by road and rail to their required positions on the frontier.²

¹ The place of the Guard Corps at Berlin was to be taken by a Reserve Corps of twenty-four battalions and twenty-four squadrons of Landwehr troops. Orders for the mobilization of this corps were issued on the 19th of May, but the Guard Corps did not go to the front until some time later.

² Little more than two years later, during the winter of 1868–9,

When this concentration was complete the Prussian troops were distributed along the southern frontier as follows :—

Army of the Elbe : approximate strength, 46,000 men ;
14th Division at Zeitz, 8th Corps at Halle.

1st Army : approximate strength, 93,000 men ; 4th
Corps at Torgau, 2nd Corps at Herzberg, 3rd Corps at
Kottbus.

2nd Army : approximate strength, including the Guard
Corps, which had not yet arrived, 115,000 men ; 5th
Corps at Landshut, 6th Corps at Waldenburg. The
mounted troops belonging to the 5th and 6th Corps
had been formed into a cavalry division, and were
near Striegau, some distance in rear of the infantry.
The 1st Corps, still acting independently, was at
Görlitz.

Under this arrangement the extent of front to be covered by the three Prussian armies was no less than 276 miles, and the weakness of the position is so apparent that it has been very freely criticized.

Prussian view of the general situation.—At the time when the orders were issued from Berlin the intelligence regarding the Austrian army was still very defective. It was known that the Saxon Corps was assembled at Dresden, and that the Austrian 1st Corps had its outposts at Tetschen, Reichenberg, and Trautenau. So much only was certain ; but it was calculated that the Austrians could quickly concentrate from 60,000 to 80,000 men, a force which, although insufficient to carry out an invasion of Prussia,

von Moltke calculated that if war were to break out with France he could concentrate nearly 350,000 men on the frontier of Alsace and Lorraine by the 19th day of mobilization. It has been calculated that to-day 19 German Army Corps, 760,000 men, exclusive of Cavalry Corps, could be placed on the French frontier in 10 days.

was quite capable of menacing either Berlin or Breslau. "In the one direction," says the Prussian history, "stood the Saxon Army as a powerful advanced guard only six or seven marches from the Prussian capital. . . . On the other side Breslau could be reached in five marches, and the more easily since the Prussian Government, relying upon the federal compact with Austria, had not kept up the fortifications of Schweidnitz." From this passage it seems clear that the original concentration was planned primarily with a view to covering the two important towns of Berlin and Breslau. This object might, it is true, have been achieved by assembling the armies in the neighbourhood of Görlitz; and at the same time the risk of defeat in detail would have been avoided. But, as must always be the case in Europe under modern conditions, military considerations were largely controlled by railway facilities. In this case it was known that so far as mobilization was concerned Prussia was a little behind her enemy; but in the matter of transport she had a great advantage. From Vienna only one railway ran northward towards the frontier. As far as Lundenberg the track was doubled, but from that point to Olmütz and Brünn, and beyond, there was but a single line. Prussia, on the other hand, had five railways by which she could move her troops towards the frontier, and it was by using these lines that she intended to make up for delay in mobilization. Several of them ran from Prussian territory into Saxony, but, owing to the hostile attitude of that country, their termini for military purposes were at Zeitz, Halle, Herzberg, Görlitz, Schweidnitz, and Neisse. It was, therefore, the situation of these towns, all of which were within a few miles of the frontier, which determined the initial points of concentration of the armies; moreover, since no magazines had been prepared, the

difficulty of supply forbade the assembly of the entire army at any one point.

The danger inseparable from the wide dispersal was, however, realized, and the next problem which von Moltke and the Prussian staff had to consider was the best method of bringing their forces into closer touch. Railway transport being no longer possible, the next stage of the concentration must be carried out by route march; and, again to quote the official history, the question then arose, "whether the different portions of the army should be brought together by marches along the circumference (i.e. along the frontier) or by operations directed towards the centre." It is obvious that the latter course must have involved the immediate invasion of Saxony and Bohemia, and since Prussia, and especially King William, were anxious to avoid any appearance of aggressive intention, it was dismissed as impracticable. There remained only the flank march along the frontier, and on the 30th May, some days before the detrainment was complete, the Army of the Elbe and the 1st Army were ordered to march eastward, and at the same time the 1st Corps marched to Hirschberg, where it joined the 2nd Army, to which it was henceforth definitely attached. These movements were carried out by the 8th June, by which date the strategical concentration of the Prussians may be considered to have been completed.

The Prussian strategical concentration.—The exact positions of the troops then were:—

Army of the Elbe.

Advanced Guard	Mühlberg
14th Division	Schildau
15th Division	Belgern
16th Division and Reserve Cavalry	Liebenwerda
Reserve Artillery	Torgau

1st Army.

3rd Corps	.	.	.	.	.	Görlitz
4th Corps	.	.	.	.	.	Hoyerswerda
2nd Corps	.	.	.	.	.	Senftenberg

2nd Army.

1st Corps	.	.	.	.	.	Hirschberg
5th Corps	.	.	.	.	.	Landshut
6th Corps	.	.	.	.	.	Waldenburg
Cavalry Division	.	.	.	.	.	round Striegau

The Austrian mobilization.—While this concentration was in progress the Austrian Government, with singular lack of discretion, precipitated war by suddenly summoning the Estates of the Duchy of Holstein. Like her enemy, Austria had to consider the possibility of being called upon to operate simultaneously in two theatres, but from the first it had been clear that if war should break out it would be decided upon her northern frontier. So far back as the middle of March the Imperial forces had been divided into two armies, the weaker of which was to operate in Italy,¹ should the necessity arise; and the stronger, known as the Army of the North, was to oppose Prussia.²

In the southern theatre events developed with such rapidity that orders for the mobilization of the Army of the South were issued on the 21st April; and a few days later, between the 26th April and the 7th May, similar orders were issued to the Army of the North and the fortress garrisons were placed upon a war footing. From the 8th May until

¹ 5th, 7th, and 9th Corps and a cavalry brigade.

² 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th Corps, two divisions of light cavalry, three divisions of heavy cavalry, and reserve artillery; the 9th Corps was added to this army on the 24th May. At this date the Austrian army had no divisional organization. The brigade was the tactical unit; four brigades formed an army corps.

the end of June great efforts were made to increase the numerical strength of the available forces by the formation of fifth battalions for the infantry regiments and similar measures. By thus hastening her mobilization Austria gained a certain advantage over her principal opponent, which, however, was more than counterbalanced in the later stages by the efficiency of the Prussian railway system.

Austrian view of the general situation.—Meanwhile the staff in Vienna was engaged in drawing up a plan of campaign for the Army of the North, and for this purpose Major-General von Krismanic was summoned to the capital. The Prussian army was known to be organized in nine corps, and of these it was estimated that one or two would be required on the Rhine or elsewhere. Seven or eight corps would, therefore, be available for operations in the principal theatre, and a further force of some 13,000 infantry and cavalry might be furnished by minor principalities. The greatest force which Austria must be prepared to meet on her northern frontier would thus be 236,000 infantry, 29,000 cavalry, and 800 guns. To oppose this force Austria could place in the field, excluding from her calculations the assistance which might be received from Saxony or any other state, 200,000 infantry, 23,000 cavalry, and 744 field guns. In numerical strength there was not much to choose between the combatants; nor, so far as military considerations were concerned, was there any reason why the war should not be carried into the enemy's country. The Prussian concentration had been planned, in the first instance, with a view to the protection of Berlin and Breslau, and by moving upon either one or other of those towns the Austrian army could have compelled the enemy to conform to its movements, and would thereby have dictated the course of the opening

phase of the campaign. Had offensive operations been contemplated three courses were open :—

- (a) To concentrate in Moravia, to the north of Olmütz.
- (b) To concentrate in Bohemia, on the line already held by the 1st Corps—Tetschen, Reichenberg, Trautenau.
- (c) To concentrate in Saxony, when the Austrian army would have been in comparatively close touch with the troops of Bavaria, Baden, and Würtemberg.

The railway communications of the Empire centred in the capital, and the first of these three courses, with a view to an advance into Silesia, was the easiest to carry out and, as will be seen later, was greatly feared by Prussia. No such plan of offensive operations was, however, contemplated in Vienna. Like her enemy, Austria wished to appear in the eyes of Europe, and in those of the minor states of the Confederacy, as the injured party ; but, unlike Prussia, she was also ready to maintain this defensive attitude in the theatre of military operations as well as in the field of diplomacy. It was the policy of the State to adhere to the defensive, and while lamenting a decision which imposed so serious a handicap upon the army, General von Krismanic loyally accepted it, and prepared his memorandum solely with a view to meeting the enemy on Austrian soil. Prussia, he believed, would concentrate her armies in Silesia and advance upon Vienna. With the Austrian capital as her goal three lines were open to her :—

- (1) From Glatz by Mittelwalde.
- (2) From Neisse on Freudenthal.
- (3) By Ratibor on Troppau.

It was not proposed to meet the threatened invasion by

a purely passive defence ; but it was considered to be of the first importance that the army should be based upon a fortress, and for this purpose Olmütz was held to be the most suitable place. Other lines of action were also discussed in this memorandum, among them the possibility that Prussia might decline to cross the frontier, but the final proposal was that the Army of the North should be concentrated at Olmütz, and should there fight the decisive battle—a proposal which was not only vicious in itself, but which was based upon false assumptions as to the intentions of the enemy. To surrender the initiative without an effort was wrong ; but to assume that while doing so it was still possible to select the field of battle, shows a strange ignorance of the whole military art. In war situations change with such rapidity that even for the force which is acting upon the offensive it is difficult to define any course of action to be followed for more than a few days at a time ; for the force which is acting upon the defensive even this degree of certainty is impossible.

Nevertheless von Krismanic's plan was accepted by von Benedek when he was appointed to the command of the Army of the North on the 12th May, and its author was selected as his Director of Operations. The Austrian Intelligence Bureau seems to have been far better served than the Prussian, and it soon became known in Vienna that a hostile force, 38,000 strong, was to be massed about Görlitz during the latter part of May. The 1st Division of Light Cavalry was pushed forward to the frontier ; and a few days later General Clam Gallas, the Commander of the 1st Corps, asked to be allowed to draw in his scattered detachments towards his right, in order to oppose the enemy, who, he believed, was on the point of entering Bohemia near Reichenberg. Leave was at first granted ; but on the 8th June, the day after von Manteuffel had

entered Holstein, the 1st Division of Light Cavalry was attached to the 1st Corps, and Clam Gallas was ordered to concentrate at Jung Bunzlau and, after drawing in the Saxon Army to himself, to fall back upon the main army. Meanwhile the units of von Benedek's army were being moved to the chosen ground round Olmütz, and on the 10th June they stood as follows :—

Austrian strategic concentration.

2nd Corps	. . . . .	Zwittau
4th Corps	. . . . .	Muglitz
6th Corps	. . . . .	Prerau
10th Corps	. . . . .	Blansko
3rd Corps	. . . . .	Brünn
8th Corps	. . . . .	Auspitz
2nd Division Light Cavalry	. . . . .	Freudenthal
1st Division Heavy Cavalry	. . . . .	Prossnitz
2nd Division Heavy Cavalry	. . . . .	Kremsier
3rd Division Heavy Cavalry	. . . . .	Wischau

Summary.—Including the 1st Corps, the strength of the Austrian Army of the North amounted to 247,000 men. To these should be added the Saxon Army of 24,000 men, which was at Dresden, giving a total strength at the outbreak of war on the 15th June, 1866, of 271,000. To operate against this force, the main strength of her enemies, Prussia had massed on her southern frontier 278,600 men. In the primary theatre of operations Prussia had, therefore, a slight numerical superiority; but to attain this end she had reduced the force available for operations in the west until it was outnumbered by over 70,000. Success against his most formidable foe was the goal at which von Moltke aimed; and to achieve this end he was prepared to incur considerable risk elsewhere.

The theatre of operations (see Map 2).—Northern

Bohemia, the theatre of many great wars, forms a flattened triangle, whose base runs east and west through Prag, and whose sides, the Metal Mountains or Erz Gebirge on the north-west and the Giant Mountains or Riesen Gebirge on the north-east, meet at an obtuse angle some sixty miles north of that town. Beyond the Riesen Gebirge Prussia was free to mass her troops in Silesia when and how she pleased, but to the north-west Saxony, which was pro-Austrian both by sentiment and tradition, lay like a buffer State between the principal belligerents. Through the mountains the roads available for the movement of armies are few and well defined. Of these the best known is the great rift which the Elbe has burst for itself through the Erz Gebirge from Bohemia into Saxony, and which has so often resounded to the tramp of armed men. On the other side of the triangle there are the three defiles of Parschnitz, Braunau, and Nachod, of which the last named is the most famous. Inside this mountain barrier a second line of defence is formed by the upper waters of the Elbe and by its tributary the Iser, both of which must be crossed before hostile forces advancing from Saxony and Silesia could effect their junction upon Austrian soil. So much may be seen from any good map; but detailed description is more difficult. To many British soldiers, such expressions as the Kapellen Berg, the chapel-crowned hill which looks down upon Trautenau, and the Parschnitz defile will inevitably conjure up a vision of the Indian frontier and the Khyber Pass; and speaking generally, it may be said that accounts by foreign writers, better accustomed as they are to the plains of Europe than to the sort of country in which we are so often called upon to operate, tend to produce in our minds an exaggerated idea of the topographical difficulties which the Prussians had to overcome. On the whole, perhaps, the country on the

Bohemian side of the mountains, where the preliminary engagements took place, is not unlike the northern slopes of the borderland which lies between Tweed and Tyne. The foreign hills are higher than our own, but so too are the valleys, and it is the relative, not the actual, height of peak and plain which affects military operations. But, after all, if it is not possible to convey an accurate impression of the country, it does not very much matter; infantry and cavalry have before now fought in far more difficult country than the foot-hills of the Riesen Gebirge, and even in far easier country wheeled transport is confined to roads and bridges.

Once across the Elbe the hills cease altogether, and their place is taken by open, rolling plains, where the only obstacles to movement are a few small but marshy streams, and where cavalry, vigorously handled, could have found full scope. Such, in brief, were the topographical features which might have been turned to account by the Austrian army acting, as it elected to do, on the defensive. First the buffer state of Saxony on the north-west; then the mountain barrier, traversable only at certain well-known points; then the river line of Elbe and Iser, with comparatively few bridges; lastly the great plain in which the decisive battle was eventually fought.

CHAPTER III

THE OPENING OF HOSTILITIES

MAP 2

The protection of Silesia.—While the eastward march of the Prussian 1st Army and the Army of the Elbe was being carried out, the army head-quarters, which had not been moved from Berlin, were still ignorant of the Austrian concentration round Olmütz. In the face of a well-prepared, thoroughly mobile enemy the movement would have been attended with some considerable risk ; but diplomatic notes were still passing between the capitals, and the disinclination of Austria to strike the first blow was thoroughly realized. The veil was soon lifted, for on the 11th June, three days after the Prussian armies had reached their allotted positions, a copy of the Austrian *ordre de bataille*, giving the exact positions, strength, and composition of von Benedek's army, was received in Berlin. Curiously enough, this piece of information, which had been so long awaited and should have been of incalculable value, was the immediate cause of a grave blunder. Until this moment it had been supposed that the main Austrian forces were collecting in Bohemia, covered by the Saxons and the 1st Corps. The latest intelligence made it clear that almost the whole army was in Moravia, and the Prussian official history claims that the logical deduction was that no danger was threatening Berlin ; and that if an invasion of Silesia was intended it must be made by

way of Neisse against Breslau. From the first an altogether exaggerated degree of importance had been attached to Breslau, and the Crown Prince of Prussia had already asked permission to march towards the Neisse. His request was now granted. By this movement the front of the Prussian armies, which had been reduced during the early days of June from 276 to 156 miles, was again dangerously extended. At no time had the gap between the right of the 2nd Army and the left of the 1st Army been less than thirty miles; this distance was now increased from three to eight marches. Moreover, the 2nd Army, consisting of three corps only,¹ was brought to within six marches of the greatly superior hostile force which was massed about Olmütz. To lessen the obvious danger of defeat, the 2nd Army was reinforced by the addition of the Guard Corps to the Crown Prince's command; but it would appear that had the advance upon Breslau really been intended, the Austrians would have been opposed by no more than four corps, and might have gained a very important success at the outset of the operations.

Von Benedek's plan of operations.—Just as the news of the presence of the Austrian army in the neighbourhood of Olmütz had a bad effect upon the Prussian strategy, so the rumour of the march to the Neisse bred doubt and indecision in the mind of von Benedek. War was declared on the night of the 15th–16th June, but the following day found the Austrian Commander-in-Chief still patiently waiting upon events. His troops had been ordered to draw closer together, and during the 16th he telegraphed to his imperial master that: (1) should the Prussians remain in their positions about Görlitz and Landshut the Austrian army

¹ Including the 1st Corps, which had formed the connecting link between the Crown Prince and Prince Frederick Charles, but had now been definitely attached to the former, i.e. to the 2nd Army.

would move to Josefstadt, where it would prepare to receive battle, or even to take the offensive should a favourable opportunity arise; (2) that should the Prussians carry out an invasion from Silesia, as the latest advices seemed to indicate, then the Austrians would meet them near Olmütz. No such indecision characterized the Prussian generalship, and within a few hours of the failure of the negotiations General Herwath von Bittenfeld crossed the Saxon frontier at the head of the Army of the Elbe. This action admitted of no doubt whatever. The Saxon army, as previously arranged, fell back into Bohemia, loyally abandoning its own territory in order to assist its ally upon the decisive field, and on the 17th June von Benedek ordered the Army of the North to march from Moravia to Josefstadt. Clam Gallas' corps, to which had been added the 1st Division of Light Cavalry, immediately concentrated at Jung Bunzlau, where it was in a position to protect this movement against interference from the north, and the 2nd Corps and 2nd Division of Light Cavalry, which were at Landskron, received orders to watch the mountain passes and the lines of invasion from the direction of Glatz.

By thus moving his main force into Bohemia, von Benedek placed himself in a central position between the divided forces of his enemy and adopted the course which von Moltke had always believed to be the wisest. Nevertheless the question must arise whether at the time that it was actually made the move to Josefstadt was the best possible. The march of the Crown Prince's army away from its principal force had, as already indicated, offered to the Austrian Commander a favourable objective for offensive action; but by placing himself in Bohemia von Benedek voluntarily accepted the defensive. His position there undoubtedly possessed many advantages,

but it is questionable whether even they were sufficient to justify him in neglecting an opportunity to strike. The Prussian official history suggests that although the Austrian army was in position round Olmütz at a comparatively early date, nevertheless, the condition of the supply services forbade rapidity of movement. No doubt this explanation may have some weight, but there is nothing in von Benedek's published dispatches to show that he at any moment contemplated seriously carrying the war into the enemy's country. He was, he says, prepared to take advantage of "the slightest error that the enemy might make, and to act on the offensive should a favourable opportunity present itself"; but his generalship was not calculated to induce his enemy to make mistakes, and to generals of this stamp favourable opportunities do not readily present themselves. In strong contrast to this waiting attitude is the Prussian decision to invade Saxony. The Austrian army could not leave its camp round Olmütz until the 20th June, and at the very outset of the campaign von Moltke had gained an advantage of four valuable days. The initiative lay with him, and from the moment war was declared there was no longer any anxiety as to the possibility of an attack upon Breslau. That danger had passed. Von Benedek's march into Bohemia definitely decided the general lines of the coming campaign. The offensive would lie with Prussia, and the Austrian troops would assemble in a central defensive position, whence they would be free to operate as circumstances should demand.

Properly handled, the general situation, as well as the topography of the theatre of war, were favourable to von Benedek's strategy. The Crown Prince's move to the Neisse had left a gap between the Prussian 1st and 2nd Armies which could not be easily closed, and the defiles of

the Riesen Gebirge, through which the invading army must pass from Silesia into Bohemia, were well suited for delaying action. Unfortunately for Austria, her Commander-in-Chief had no idea of how to utilize his central position, even should he succeed in effecting his concentration at Josefstadt. To operate successfully, and to defeat his enemy in detail, it was first necessary that he should secure for himself as extended a zone of manœuvre as the circumstances would admit. For this purpose the Saxon army and Clam Gallas' corps had been well placed from the first. All that was necessary was to unite them under one hand and post them between Tetschen and Reichenberg, with orders to delay the advance of the Prussian armies, but not to risk decisive action against superior force. Similar measures should have been taken to oppose the Crown Prince, and here the topographical features were particularly favourable to the force which was acting on the defensive. Through the mountainous country of the Riesen Gebirge three difficult defiles gave access into Bohemia from the east. These passes were separated from each other by from fifteen to twenty miles, and between them lateral communication was impossible. To pass an army through such country must always be a difficult and dangerous task, and in the face of an active enemy should be almost impossible. With covering forces holding the frontier roads, and the bulk of his army in a central position, ready to hurl itself upon whichever adversary should seem to afford the better objective, von Benedek would have had many chances in his favour. His dispositions indicate no such active policy. His dispatches, it is true, still contain assurances of his intention to assume the offensive at an early date, but his orders all point directly to a passive defence.

Prussian information.—We now come to the important

question as to the information possessed by von Moltke with regard to the Austrian march to Josefstadt. General Bonnal, who hints broadly at bribery, states "the corps of the 2nd (Prussian) Army were scarcely in the positions ordered on the 12th June, when the Great General Staff received positive information that the six Austrian corps grouped around Olmütz were beginning to move towards Bohemia." This is a clear statement of fact; but the Prussian official history is far less definite: "The intelligence of the position of the Austrian army was various and partly false. It all tended to say that the 1st Corps, which had been nearest to the frontier on both banks of the Elbe, had been reinforced by the 2nd Corps, and that even the Saxon Corps had been added. Further, that the 3rd Corps was marching on Pardubitz, the 8th on Brünn, and the 4th moving in a westerly direction." So far from considering their information to be positive, the official historians commit themselves no further than by saying that "a concentration in Northern Bohemia was at least possible." Between these two statements there is a world of difference, and the point is of importance when considering von Moltke's direction of affairs during the next few days.

Preparations for the invasion of Bohemia.—On the 18th June the Army of the Elbe passed through Dresden.¹ The Saxons retired; but as there was no certainty that they might not again advance in co-operation with a Bavarian force, the control of Saxony was entrusted, on the 19th, to the 2nd Division of the Reserve Corps, which henceforth

¹ In abandoning the capital the Saxons followed the precedent of 1756; but for once history did not repeat itself. On the earlier occasion the army was blockaded at Pirna, forced to capitulate, and finally incorporated with the Prussian force under Frederick. In 1866 it played a far more creditable part.

acted as a flank guard to the great field armies. On the same day the Army of the Elbe was definitely attached to the 1st Army, and its commander, General Herwath, was placed under the command of H.R.H. Prince Frederick Charles. These were matters of organization only, and it is noteworthy that the actual movements ordered on the 19th, when, according to General Bonnal, von Moltke was fully informed as to the intentions of his enemy, were directed merely towards the closer concentration of the Prussian forces. With this object in view the Army of the Elbe, moving in one column along the right bank of that river, was directed upon Gabel, a distance of sixty-five miles, which was covered in six days. Similarly on the left flank, the greater part of the 2nd Army was drawn in towards the centre, and its orders were :—

- (1) The 1st Corps to move from Munsterberg to Landshut (48 miles), with a view to assisting the 1st Army during its passage through the defiles of the Iser and upper Elbe.
- (2) The Guard Corps to move from Brieg to Silberberg.
- (3) The 5th Corps to march from Grottkau to Kamenz.
- (4) The 6th Corps to move to Neisse, whence it was to demonstrate towards the frontier, with a view to protecting the march of the main body from any interference from Moravia.

These movements are distinctly tentative in their nature, and seem to bear out the official contention that the idea of an Austrian invasion of Silesia had not yet been dismissed. Von Moltke still maintains his preference for concentration "towards the centre," instead of along the circumference of the semicircle upon which his armies stood; but it was not until three days later that he finally made up his mind that the decisive battle of the

campaign would be fought in Bohemia. Exactly what information came to hand between the 19th and the 22nd we do not know ; possibly the mere fact that all was quiet on the southern frontier of Silesia was held to be sufficient indication of the Austrian intentions.

Orders for the invasion of Bohemia.—In any case, there is no longer any attempt at a compromise between attack and defence, and on the 22nd June a telegram was dispatched to the head-quarters of the 1st and 2nd Armies, saying, “His Majesty commands that both armies shall advance into Bohemia and endeavour to concentrate in the direction of Gitschin.” A further telegram impressed upon the two commanders that the actual point of junction must not be considered to have been unalterably fixed, and that much must still depend upon later developments. Nevertheless it was hoped that the concentration of the Austrian army in Northern Bohemia might be anticipated ; and the message to Prince Frederick Charles ended with the important words, “Since the difficult task of debouching from the mountains falls on the 2nd Army, which is the weaker, the 1st Army must shorten the crisis by rapidly advancing so soon as the junction with Herwath’s force has been effected.” In that one sentence the whole danger of the Prussian situation and the steps by which it was to be met are tersely expressed. It forms almost an epitome of von Moltke’s theory of war, which departed from the Napoleonic system of an advance by one line only, and adhered to the old Prussian system of a converging movement of his two armies from widely separated bases.¹ The danger involved is not disregarded ;

¹ In this connexion it is extremely interesting and important to compare von Moltke’s plan of campaign with Frederick the Great’s action under very similar circumstances.

(1) 15th August, 1744, Frederick marched on Prag in three

rather is it deliberately accepted. But every effort is to be made to reduce and possibly to nullify it by perfect timing and co-operation, and by bringing such pressure to bear with the stronger force that the enemy shall not be free to turn against and to crush the weaker. Had the risk not been realized von Moltke would have had no claim to be considered a great strategist ; but it was realized, and so far as was possible provision was made against it. Nevertheless the success which ultimately crowned the Prussian plan of campaign must not be allowed to blind us to the risk which von Moltke saw so clearly. The real points for consideration are : in the first place, whether von Benedek saw his opportunity as clearly as did von Moltke ; in the second place, whether a more able commander, at the head of a more highly trained army, would have succeeded where von Benedek failed. Was, in fact, the Prussian plan of campaign inherently better than the

columns. Two columns through Saxony, one on either side of the Elbe ; the third column under Schwerin marched from Silesia by Glatz.

- (2) In 1756, at the beginning of the Seven Years' War, 65,000 men, moving in three columns, were first to sweep up the Saxon army and then to unite with another column, again under Schwerin, which was marching from Silesia by way of Nachod.
- (3) In 1779, when war with Austria again seemed almost inevitable, Frederick intended to march into Bohemia from Glatz through Nachod, while Prince Henry with an equal force was to advance from Dresden up the Elbe valley.

The invasion of Bohemia by semi-independent armies operating from widely distant bases was, therefore, no new thing ; rather, it was consecrated by tradition and success. Where von Moltke departed from the practice of his great predecessor was in keeping his forces apart until after the decisive battle had actually begun. As in Frederick's case, Austrian lack of mobility was a contributing and potent cause of victory.

Austrian, or did it succeed because it was carried out by better commanders and more efficient troops ?

The Austrian movements.—At this point it is necessary to return for a moment to the Austrians, in order to form a better estimate of the opposition which von Moltke was likely to encounter. It had already been found necessary to introduce one or two important modifications into the plan for a general concentration round Josefstadt. Instead, the main body of the army, four corps, was to assemble on the semi-circle Josefstadt—Schurz—Miletin—Horitz ; one corps, the 8th, was to be in reserve. To the north and north-east the frontier passes were to be watched by cavalry supported by the 2nd Corps. To the west the Saxons, instead of falling back upon the main body as originally intended, were ordered to join Clam Gallas on the left bank of the Iser, where, however, the combined forces were to act as little more than a corps of observation. The command of this body was given to the Crown Prince of Saxony, whose orders were to withdraw to the eastward should the enemy appear in superior strength. In themselves these dispositions are perfectly reasonable, but they have several grave faults. First, the moment when they might have been carried into effect had passed for ever. Von Benedek was no longer a free agent, and he was about to experience all those difficulties which, as his great opponent said at a later date, must always arise from a faulty strategical concentration at the outset of a campaign. Secondly, there was the order to the Crown Prince of Saxony. It has been seen from von Moltke's message to Prince Frederick Charles that what he most feared was the failure of the 2nd Army to debouch from the mountains, and that to minimize that danger the 1st Army was to press forward against the Austrian left. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that in ordering the 1st Corps and the Saxons

to fall back if threatened by superior force, von Benedek did exactly what his enemy most desired. Von Moltke's earnest endeavour was "to shorten the crisis," that is, to avoid delay; he could afford everything except time; yet instead of encouraging his covering troops to throw every obstacle in the way of Prince Frederick Charles, the Austrian commander deliberately ordered them to give way. What, then, it may be asked, did he hope to gain by placing so many troops behind the Iser? The question is not easy to answer. They were too many for observation, yet were not intended to fight. So little does von Benedek appear to have realized the importance of the time factor, that as late as the 20th June he wrote: "So soon as I am established at Josefstadt, and after a few days of rest, which is absolutely indispensable, I propose to assume the offensive." Yet he knew that his various corps could not reach their destination until the 29th; and he should have known, for he was well informed as to the Prussian movements, that the indispensable period of rest was out of the question. It may be, however, that he anticipated using Clam Gallas and the Saxons as an advanced guard should he decide to operate against Prince Frederick Charles. If this is the true explanation it shows a curious misunderstanding of the strategical situation, for the initiative had already been lost, and the offensive was with the Prussians.

The invasion of Bohemia.—It seems clear, therefore, that from the first von Moltke's task was to be easier than he had any right to expect. Instead of being met at the frontier by the Austrian covering troops, Prince Frederick Charles was unopposed, and on the 25th June the 1st Army reached Reichenberg. The march of the Army of the Elbe was likewise unhindered, although the natural difficulties arising from great heat, mountainous country,

and scarcity of supply might well have been turned to the advantage of the defence. Leaving Dresden on the 20th, the sixty-five miles to Gabel were covered in six days, and on the 25th the two wings of Prince Frederick Charles' army were at last in comparatively close touch.

Meanwhile the Crown Prince of Prussia was maturing his plans for the concentration at Gitschin. He knew only too well the difficulties which he ought to experience in passing through the mountains; but for their relief he trusted largely to the indirect help which he hoped to receive from the 1st Army. In order to give time for the pressure against the Austrian left to be felt, as well as to give his own men a needed rest, he proposed to halt on the 24th, and then to move by three roads as follows :—

1st Corps.—By Trautenau to Arnau.

Guard Corps.—To Königinhof.

5th Corps.—By Nachod to Gradlitz.

The 6th Corps, which had been demonstrating on the southern frontier of Silesia, was to follow the main army without delay.

Summary of the strategical situation, 25th June.—So far, therefore, from von Benedek securing those days of repose which he deemed to be indispensable for his troops, it is evident that the march of his columns was certain to be interfered with, if not altogether prevented. A defensive policy coupled with a defensive strategy had dictated the original concentration at Olmütz; faulty organization had prevented the troops, which had been assembled in Moravia on the 10th, from being able to march into Bohemia until the 17th; and a failure to appreciate the strategical situation was to deprive the Austrian army of the excellent opportunity, which it still possessed, of defeating its enemy in detail and recovering from all its initial errors. The

strategy of Prussia, like that of Austria, had suffered from the necessity for conforming to the political needs of the State. The want of sufficient depots on the frontier had entailed a wide dispersion in the initial stages ; the defence of Silesia had then made further demands upon the available military resources ; but with each day of grace which was granted by Austrian unpreparedness or blunders the Prussian situation improved, until at last the dispersal of force, which had been a very serious "strategical disadvantage, became a tactical advantage." But before that end was achieved von Benedek had other chances to miss and von Moltke had other difficulties to overcome.

The objectives of the rival armies.—The choice of Josefstadt and Gitschin as the places of concentration of the Austrian and Prussian armies respectively calls for some comment. In the first place, it is important to note that von Benedek's order for the march of his troops into Bohemia is prefaced by the presumption that the bulk of the hostile force was standing between Görlitz and Landshut, that is to say, not more than five or six days' march from the Austrian objective. At the earliest, the leading Austrian troops were not expected to reach Josefstadt until the 25th, and the entire force, which was compelled to move in deep columns by three roads only, could not be concentrated until the 29th. It is evident, therefore, that had the Prussian army really been in the position for which von Benedek gave it credit, the march from Olmütz to Josefstadt must be extremely dangerous. Even as it was the plan had to be modified after the first encounter, and that it did not prove immediately disastrous was due to the fact that the Prussians were still widely dispersed and in no position to strike. This was a piece of good fortune for which von Benedek can in no way claim credit. Two courses appear to have been open to him. Either he must

attempt to reach Josefstadt before his movements could be interfered with by the enemy, or he must adopt a less ambitious plan and unite his forces at some point further south. Without doubt his true object was to prevent the junction of the Prussian armies and to beat them separately, and for this purpose, always provided that he was careful to secure for himself a suitable zone of manœuvre, he would be better placed the further north he could establish himself. Intrinsicly, Josefstadt was preferable as a base of operation to Königgrätz or Pardubitz, but everything depended upon whether it could be reached in safety. Properly handled, the Saxons and the 1st Corps should have been able to delay Prince Frederick Charles for some days, and the next care of the Austrian commander should have been to block the passes leading from Silesia through the Riesen Gebirge into Bohemia. If the proposed operation was to be carried out time was everything, but no attempt was made to gain it, and the Prussian army, guided by von Moltke, was the last in Europe which was likely to grant it. "If," says the Austrian official account, "instead of waiting until the last moment, the 4th and 8th Corps had been sent off a day or two earlier; if the 2nd Corps (at Landskron), which was the nearest to Josefstadt, had headed the march instead of bringing up the rear, the concentration round that town could have been effected several days earlier. Finally, if a few brigades of infantry had been sent into Bohemia by rail with orders to observe and to close the frontier defiles, they could have delayed, even had they been unable to check, the columns of the 2nd Army, and thereby have rendered it possible for the principal Austrian forces to have fallen upon Prince Frederick Charles and to have crushed him with superior numbers." Even such simple and obvious precautions as those suggested by the official historians

were, however, neglected, with results which might well have been foreseen.

While the Austrian army was moving north-eastward from Olmütz, the two wings of the Prussian forces were being directed upon Gitschin some fifteen miles to the westward of the enemy's objective. Here was a clear instance of von Moltke's preference, in certain circumstances, for concentration towards the centre instead of along the circumference of a given circle. As an alternative course it was still open to him to bring the 2nd Army into touch with the 1st by a flank march behind the Riesen Gebirge. This movement must, however, have taken some days—ten or twelve at the least, if we accept General Bonnal's estimate—and would have given the Austrians the very thing they wanted, that is to say time. "Moltke's solution of the 19th June," says General Bonnal, "however rash in appearance, was in reality wise. Extraordinary circumstances call for extreme measures, or if we prefer to put it so, if one is compelled to choose between two evils one chooses the less." Coming from General Bonnal, the greatest living exponent of the Napoleonic theory of war, these are weighty words. Throughout the earlier period of the operations he condemned the Prussian strategic deployment as unwise and dangerous; but for the bold and vigorous steps by which von Moltke corrected previous errors he has nothing but praise.¹

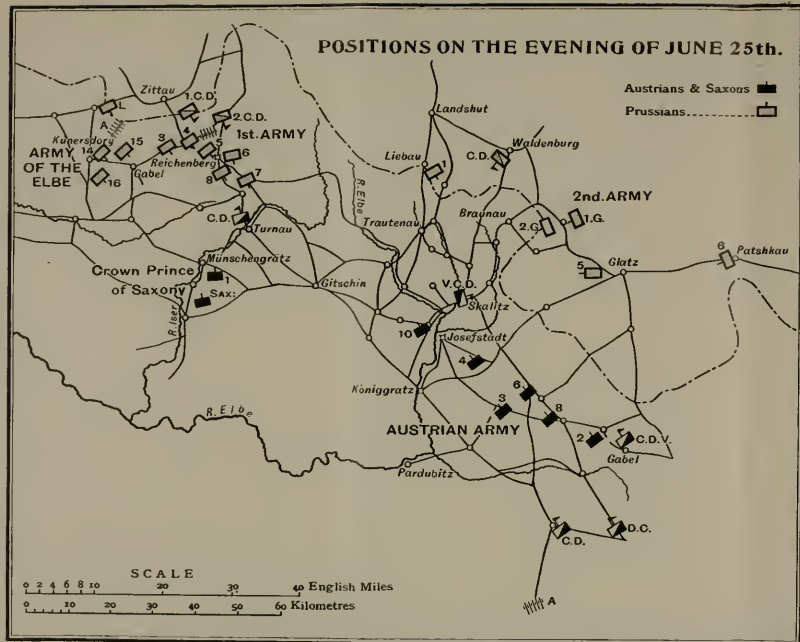
¹ See also extract from the *Militär Wochenblatt* of April 17th, quoted in General Bonnal's *Sadowa*, p. 61, and note by the translator. "The timely junction of the Prussian armies in the war of 1866 has never been represented—at least by our general staff—as a stroke of genius or a brilliant idea. It was only an expedient, a remedy, chosen skilfully, and applied with rigour for a situation inherently defective, but unavoidable." The author of this article is now known to have been von Moltke himself.

With regard to the minor point of the selection of Gitschin as the goal of the converging movement of the Prussian armies we may again refer to General Bonnal, who holds that one of the towns further eastward, Miletin, or better still Königinhof, would have been preferable. The 2nd Army had undoubtedly the more difficult task to carry out, and its movements were likely to be slow. Moreover, its chance of success depended, or perhaps it would be better to say should have depended, upon the amount of pressure brought to bear by the 1st Army. All the conditions indicated that Prince Frederick Charles would be able to march more quickly than the Crown Prince, yet Gitschin was nearer by twenty miles to the former commander's force than to the latter's. At the same time it must not be forgotten that von Moltke was careful to point out that his order of the 19th June indicated the direction of the march rather than the actual point of concentration and that the entire movement depended upon co-operation between the two armies and power to meet the situation as it developed. This argument would, however, have had equal force had Königinhof been selected rather than Gitschin, and even the slight modification of the general plan which was introduced later might then have been avoided.

The march into Bohemia.—The march of these rival armies into Northern Bohemia presents one point of unusual interest. If there is one principle of Napoleonic warfare which stands out more strongly than another, it is that the concentration of an army should be carried out beyond striking distance of the enemy; or, conversely, that when within striking distance of the enemy no commander should allow his forces to be dispersed. This great principle was abandoned both by von Benedek and by von Moltke; but between them there was this great

difference, that the latter realized the risk¹ he ran, whereas the former did not. In his famous *Memorandum for the Guidance of Superior Officers* von Moltke wrote: "It is a mistake to suppose that we are concentrated simply because an entire force is, or several are, moving by one road. We may lose more in depth than we gain in breadth." This was precisely the error into which von Benedek fell, with the result that the opening phase of the campaign takes the form of a contest between two unconcentrated forces, both of which must for a time be exposed to defeat in detail. In the one case the dispersal is from front to rear; in the other it is lateral. Both forms have their weak points, but the former has the immense advantage that the leading corps can at any moment fall back upon the rest of the army; whereas forces which are operating from widely separated bases will inevitably fly apart should they be beaten, or for any reason find it necessary to retire,¹ and their strategical weakness must then be accentuated.

¹ Blücher's retreat after Ligny is, however, an instance to the contrary; but his action upon that occasion was so bold that even Napoleon was taken by surprise.



CHAPTER IV

MARCH OF THE 1ST ARMY TOWARDS GITSCHIN

The first encounters.—Von Moltke's order of the 19th June to Prince Frederick Charles concluded with the words, "The 1st Army must, by its rapid advance, shorten the crisis." Nevertheless, probably because he was waiting for the Elbe Army to come into line, it was not until the 22nd that he finally broke up his cantonments. On the following day he moved forward in march formation, and on the 24th shots were exchanged between a squadron of Uhlans and a rather stronger body of Clam Gallas' Hussars. In obedience to von Benedek's orders the Austrian 1st Corps and the Saxons were drawn up behind the Iser, and it was evident that a collision between the opposing infantries could not be long deferred. During the 25th the Prussian 1st Army was massed round Reichenberg, where it was in close touch with the Army of the Elbe, and on the evening of that day the position of the opposing forces was as shown in the accompanying sketch. Believing that the hostile force in his immediate front comprised three corps of infantry, for the 2nd Corps was reported to have joined the 1st Corps and the Saxons,¹ Prince Frederick Charles intended to leave the main body of the 1st Army in their billets during the 26th, while the 8th Division was to push forward in reconnaissance to Liebenau, and the Army of the Elbe was to explore simultaneously in the direction of Münchengrätz. Thus began

¹ For a possible explanation of this mistake see p. 53.

that series of combats which was to end with the crushing defeat of the Austrian army, and to decide the vexed question of the leadership of the German Confederacy.

As the result of these orders the advanced guard of the Army of the Elbe encountered an Austrian detachment in front of Hühnerwasser, and after a desultory fight which lasted all day drove it into Münchengrätz.¹ Further to the north a less important skirmish took place at Bohm Aicha ; but the action of the 8th Division against the Austrian right brought on an engagement which soon involved the whole of the 1st Army.

The combat at Hühnerwasser, 26th June.—The march of the 8th Division was headed by two battalions of infantry, a squadron of cavalry, and a battery of artillery, and behind this advanced guard came the four regiments of cavalry (belonging to the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Divisions) which had been temporarily formed into a mounted division. Soon after 7 a.m., just as it was leaving Liebenau, this force was fired upon by Austrian cavalry. On both sides the artillery was brought into action, but being unsupported by infantry, the Austrian cavalry withdrew across the fords of the Iser and placed itself between Münchengrätz and Podol. By this movement the important crossing at Turnau was uncovered, and Prince Frederick Charles, who had been present throughout the action, had already called up the 5th, 6th, and 7th Divisions to push home his advantage. The reconnaissance was to have unforeseen and important results.

Soon after 2 p.m. the Crown Prince of Saxony, who had been appointed to the supreme command of the Austrian and Saxon troops behind the Iser, received from von Benedek a telegraphic order “to hold Münchengrätz and Turnau at all costs ; and to keep a sharp watch in the

¹ Prussian losses, 50 killed and wounded of all ranks ; Austrian, 277.

direction of Eisenbrod." Hitherto his instructions had been vague and unsatisfactory. He had been told no more than that he was to oppose every attack from the direction of Gabel or Reichenberg, but with what object no information had been vouchsafed. Was he to gain time for the concentration of the main body, and if so, for how long must the enemy be delayed? These are points upon which every commander of a detached force must require full knowledge, and if he is to play his part satisfactorily he must be in the confidence of his chief. No such clear understanding existed between the Austrian Commander-in-Chief and the Crown Prince of Saxony¹; but when the hostile forces were in contact definite orders were issued which it was impossible to carry out. The Prussians had occupied Turnau in strength, and a small Austrian detachment which had held Eisenbrod had retired upon Gitschin. Still, there appeared to be just a chance that Turnau might be retaken, but to do so it would be necessary to employ most of the troops which were garrisoning Münchengrätz. Instead of moving directly against his objective, Prince Albert proposed to deliver his attack against Liebenau, as, if that place were taken, it was believed that the Prussians would be unable to maintain themselves in Turnau. The necessary force could not be set in motion until the following day, but in the meantime a brigade was to establish itself on some high ground opposite Podol and to make good the crossings for the main body.

Action at Podol, 26th–27th June.—The plan was in itself simple and good, but the time when it might have been carried out had passed. A single Austrian company was in Podol, but as the brigade which had been detailed to hold

¹ There was, moreover, no sympathy between von Benedek and Clam Gallas; the latter, as the head of one of the greatest families of Bohemia, could not bring himself loyally to accept the authority of a chief of less distinguished ancestry

the crossings approached the village a violent rifle-fire announced that it had been attacked. From 7.30 p.m. until 1 a.m. the fight for the bridge went on with varying success, but the Austrians lost so much more heavily than their opponents¹ that although approximately equal in numbers they were compelled to retire towards Brezina, leaving Prince Frederick Charles in possession of the crossings at Turnau and Podol, whence he was in a position to turn the flank of the troops in Münchengrätz, should that place still be held against the Army of the Elbe.

The handling of the cavalry.—The easy success of the Prussians must be attributed principally to the intrinsically vicious conceptions of war which had characterized so many of the Austrian plans. Although a whole cavalry division (five regiments²) had been posted in Bohemia for some time, Prince Frederick Charles had been allowed to conceal not only his strength, but also the direction of his march; the sudden appearance of the Prussians at Turnau came as a complete surprise, and the plan for retaking that place shows an entire misconception of the general situation; a misconception which with properly handled cavalry should have been impossible. This is the more remarkable since the movements of the Prussian armies were covered only by the divisional cavalry; for while the infantry was fighting for the crossings over the Iser the cavalry corps were still following far in rear. In the circumstances the surprise of Turnau is inexcusable; but it is accounted for by the fact that the cavalry, like the infantry, acted purely on the defensive. In the hands of a vigorous commander the

¹ Prussian losses, 12 officers and 118 men; Austrian, 33 officers and 1015 men. This discrepancy can only be accounted for by the superior training and leading of the Prussians.

² The 2nd Windischgrätz Dragoons had been detached some time previously from the 1st Light Cavalry Division and had joined the main army.

Austrian squadrons would have been pushed forward until every movement of the hostile armies would have been observed, and even had the defending infantry found no opportunity to strike a blow, the Iser defiles would at least not have been won by the invading army almost without the loss of a man.

The Prussians were hardly less heavily handicapped than their opponents by the lack of mounted troops, but it was not until after the line of the Iser had been secured that the want was really apparent ; for a time the success of the infantry covered up all deficiencies, but, exactly as in 1870, it was found impossible to maintain contact with the beaten enemy. Believing that he was opposed by three corps of infantry, Prince Frederick Charles spent the whole of the 27th in preparation for an attack upon Münchengrätz, which would open the way for the Army of the Elbe. An outflanking movement from Podol and Turnau was to be combined with a frontal attack by Herwath von Bittenfeld. In all, six divisions were to attack the two Austrian corps ; three divisions were kept in reserve ; a small body of cavalry supported by the 5th Division was to reconnoitre from Turnau in the direction of Gitschin. In this way a frontal attack upon Münchengrätz was to be combined with an enveloping movement against the Austrian right.

The Austrian retreat to Gitschin.—All the troops were to be in position by daybreak on the 28th, and the battle was to begin at 9 a.m. ; but in the meantime the Crown Prince of Saxony had made up his mind to fall back upon Gitschin. Although wrong in principle, this decision was entirely in accord with von Benedek's orders of the 20th to Clam Gallas. The insignificant action at Podol had been sufficient to induce Prince Frederick Charles to lose a day in changing from march to battle formation, and the

more often he could be persuaded to repeat the process the more time would be gained for the concentration at Josefstadt. From Münchengrätz to Gitschin is twenty miles, and in that distance it should have been possible to find at least one position upon which to make a show of fighting. Such would have been the policy of a true strategic rearguard, but von Benedek's instructions to "retire upon the main body should the enemy appear in superior strength" were perfectly clear. A later order, it is true, had said that Münchengrätz and Turnau must be held at all costs; but by the time it was received the latter place had fallen, rendering the former untenable, and the progress of events upon the eastern frontier had caused the Commander-in-Chief to modify his views. The passages of the Iser were now, it would appear, considered to have lost something of their importance, and the propriety of retaining them was left to the judgment of the commander on the spot, who, however, was still vouchsafed no clear instructions as to the considerations by which he should be guided in forming his opinion.¹

Rearguard action at Münchengrätz, 28th June.—At 11 p.m. on the 27th a brigade of Austrian infantry went off to the eastward and took up a position astride of the Turnau-Gitschin road, so as to protect the northern flank of the retiring army. The general retreat was deferred until the morning of the 28th, but by the time the Prussian columns were converging against Münchengrätz the Austrians, headed by the cavalry division, were well on

¹ The actual wording of this later order was:—"Strong hostile detachments are in front of Trautenau and Nachod. The concentration round Josefstadt is consequently delayed. Your answer has not reached me; not knowing your intentions I must leave it to you to judge whether the movement proposed for the 27th (i.e. the recapture of Turnau) is still advisable, notwithstanding the above information."

their way towards Gitschin. In the absence of their cavalry corps the Prussians failed to discover what was going on in their immediate front, and the enemy was allowed to slip away unmolested ; with the result that the elaborate movement upon Münchengrätz, intended to crush a formidable foe, resolved itself into a smart action with the hostile rearguard in which the Austrians lost 20 officers and more than 1600 men, while the total Prussian casualties were less than 350. By nightfall the Austrian 1st Corps and the Saxons were at Sobotka and Unter-Bautzen respectively, and the cavalry, which was leading the retreat, had pushed through to Gitschin, where it was joined about 9 p.m. by a brigade of infantry. With the first signs of daylight on the 29th the rearward march was resumed. Apparently the Crown Prince of Saxony thought only of reaching the main army with as little delay as possible, but when in the neighbourhood of Gitschin he heard from head-quarters that he was to be reinforced during the day by the 3rd Corps, and that the Commander-in-Chief was meditating an immediate advance in the direction of Turnau.

The action at Gitschin, 29th June. Austrian position.—

Even before the dispatch which contained this information reached its destination a fresh plan had been evolved, but the Crown Prince knew nothing of the change until some hours later. His duty was clear, and he naturally decided to stand and fight. The 1st Corps and the cavalry were posted to the north and north-west of Gitschin, and the Saxons took position to the west and south-west. Although there can be no question of the wisdom of fighting, the Crown Prince's dispositions are open to some criticism. His troops were disposed on a comparatively wide arc, towards which no less than five routes converged, by any or all of which the Prussians might advance. Keeping

no strong reserve under his own hand, and having deployed before the enemy's intention had been discovered, he openly invited envelopment. A wiser course would have been to concentrate in or behind the town, to cover his main body with advanced forces, to interfere with the correct timing of the enemy's movements, and to strike at whichever body should appear to offer the best opportunity. For an effort of this nature the country was exceedingly well suited, since troops advancing from Turnau and Sobotka were absolutely isolated from one another by the wooded hills of Prywicin; so much so that each of the two Prussian divisions which fought on the 29th, one to the north and the other to the south, firmly believed that it was the only one engaged.

Preparations for attack.—On this day the head-quarters of His Majesty the King of Prussia were still in Berlin. The information which had come in from the front showed that the 2nd Army was opposed by the 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th Austrian Corps; the 2nd Corps had been located some distance to the rear; but the whereabouts of the 3rd Corps was unknown, and it appeared possible that it might have joined the Crown Prince of Saxony on the Iser. This information was, of course, transmitted to Prince Frederick Charles, who was further informed that "His Majesty expects that the speedy advance of the 1st Army will disengage the 2nd Army, which, notwithstanding a series of successful actions, is still in a precarious situation." Moreover, the opposition encountered in the Riesen Gebirge had made it necessary to change the point of concentration of the Prussians rather further to the eastward than Gitschin, the place which had originally been selected, so that the distance to be covered by the 2nd Army was slightly increased.

Such was the problem presented to Prince Frederick

Charles on the morning of the 29th June. Since he had delivered his blow in the air some twenty-four hours earlier touch with the retreating enemy had been lost, except for a trivial cavalry encounter near Gitschin. The march of the 7th and 8th Divisions, which had been directed against the Austrian right, had brought them across the front of the Army of the Elbe, with the result that when the advance was resumed General Herwath von Bittenfeld found himself compelled to follow in rear of the 1st Army instead of being abreast of it. For some reason, which the official account leaves unexplained, no movement was made until after midday, probably because, owing to indifferent staff work, the change from fighting to march formation could not be effected more speedily. The first division to move was the 3rd, under General von Werder, and about 1.30 p.m. von Tümpling's division, the 5th, left Rowensko, where it had spent the night. Both divisions were directed upon Gitschin—the former from the west, the latter from the north-west—and between them were the rocky Prywicin heights, which have already been mentioned. A little further to the south a third column, headed by the 6th Division, was to move through Unter- and Ober-Bautzen.

Von Tümpling's division.—A two hours' march, in the course of which a squadron of Austrian cavalry was easily brushed aside, brought von Tümpling's advanced guard into contact with the enemy's infantry near Kniznitz. His orders were to take possession of Gitschin and to push on beyond it; but between him and his goal the Austrians were strongly posted. The left of their position rested upon difficult heights; in the centre were five or six batteries of artillery which swept all possible lines of approach; there remained only the right flank, and there clearly was the best chance of success. This was the point selected for the main attack, and at the same time the

church steeple of Gitschin was given as the general objective. A true military steeplechase. Gradually the fight developed, until at 6 p.m. the Prussian line, in its endeavour to reach the enemy's flanks, was stretched out over a distance of three miles, and no more than two battalions remained in reserve. At this critical moment the Saxon 2nd Division, which had been hastily summoned from the south, arrived on the scene of action and retook the village of Diletz, which had fallen into the hands of the Prussians. It would almost seem that a vigorous attack against the centre of von Tümpling's slender line must have decided the day in favour of the allies, but the Prussian 4th Division was hurrying to the assistance of the 5th, and the 3rd Division was beginning to make itself felt to the south of the Prywicin heights.

Von Werder's division.—About 3 p.m. von Werder had heard guns away to the northward; but the sounds had died away, and being without information as to the Austrian movements, and without cavalry to obtain it, he seems to have come to the conclusion that he would be able to reach Gitschin without fighting. In this he was disappointed, as his march was barred by Ringelsheim's brigade and some cavalry. From 4.30 p.m. until 9 p.m. the hostile forces faced one another on the Sobotka road without either being able to obtain any marked advantage. The Austrian right and centre were securely posted, and an attempt to turn the left resulted in failure. When darkness came on the tactical position was unchanged; but at 7.30 p.m. Major Count Sternberg had arrived from army head-quarters with instructions to the Crown Prince of Saxony "to avoid any encounter with superior forces of the enemy, and to effect a junction with the main army by way of Horitz and Miletin, the four other corps having in the meanwhile been otherwise disposed of." After all,

therefore, the 3rd Corps was not to come to the Crown Prince's assistance, and he suddenly found that a mistaken confidence in his chief had led him seriously to compromise his force.

The Austrian retreat.—The situation with which the Crown Prince was now confronted was one of exceptional difficulty. All the calculations upon which his action during the day had been based had proved false, and he had to reconstruct his policy at a moment's notice. It was obvious that he must retreat with as little delay as possible, but to break off an action in the face of an unbeaten enemy is never easy, and in this case the problem was rendered more difficult by the arrival of Prussian reinforcements. There have been cases in war where the intention to retreat has been concealed by a vigorous assumption of the offensive, and it is possible that in this instance a local success might have deceived the enemy, and at least have gained time for the streets of Gitschin to have been cleared of the baggage with which they were encumbered. No such expedient was, however, attempted, and about 9 p.m. orders were issued for a general retreat of the Saxons and the 1st Corps, covered by the cavalry. Then followed one of those scenes of confusion in which discipline is strained almost to breaking point, when an army tends to degenerate into a mob. Behind the troops retreating from the firing-line lay the streets of Gitschin, and the urgent necessity for clearing it at all costs led to the breaking up of brigades and divisions, and the separation of regiments and battalions from the remainder of the command to which they belonged. In the hope of being able to restore order and to facilitate the retreat of the Saxons, Clam Gallas decided to halt in Gitschin with his own corps until 3 a.m. on the 30th; but while his staff were actually engaged in communicating his instructions

to the subordinate commanders the leading Prussian troops burst into the central square of the village. A hurried retreat ensued, in which the 1st Corps was thrown into complete disorder, from which it did not recover until the 2nd July. The Saxons were more fortunate; their losses were far less severe, their discipline was not so highly tried, and throughout a night of retreat their units were able to maintain their cohesion and their readiness for action.

Altogether, the affair of Gitschin cost the allies a loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners of 210 officers, 5280 men, and 222 horses.¹ The Prussians lost no more than 114 officers, 2498 men, and 56 horses.

¹ Distributed as follows :

1st Corps	173 officers	4605 men	64 horses
1st Light Infantry Division	11 „	109 „	158 „
Saxons	26 „	566 „	

CHAPTER V

MARCH OF THE 2ND ARMY—TRAUTENAU AND SOOR

MAP 2

By its success on the 29th June the Prussian 1st Army reached its original rendezvous at Gitschin with comparatively slight loss. The opposition encountered had not been formidable, and such delays as had arisen had been due quite as much to the necessity of changing from march to fighting formation as to the resistance offered by the enemy. The absence of the cavalry had also been a serious hindrance to Prince Frederick Charles' movement, for he had been marching practically blindfold, and wasting his strength in elaborate manoeuvre the opportunity for which had passed away. His task had been rendered more difficult by the clumsy organization of his command, for the corps system had been abolished and the largest unit was the division. This arrangement had made it necessary for Prince Frederick Charles to issue his orders direct to twelve different units and to receive reports from twelve different staffs—six divisions of the 1st Army, four of the Army of the Elbe, a cavalry corps, and the reserve artillery. Notwithstanding these self-imposed handicaps, the commander of the 1st Army had achieved all that had been asked of him ; but it must be acknowledged that his easy success was due, in large measure, to the inactivity of his opponents. Like Kuropatkin at the beginning of the

campaign in Manchuria, von Benedek used his advanced forces merely to obtain time for the concentration of the main body, upon which they were ultimately to fall back. This idea of an ultimate concentration of the entire force in a defensive position underlay all his orders. Occasionally there was a suggestion of a possible offensive operation, but it was stillborn. It was inevitable that the same spirit should manifest itself among the subordinate commanders. More than once, at Münchengrätz as well as at Gitschin, an effective blow might have been delivered at the heads of the Prussian columns, but both actions took the form of a passive defence followed by retreat.

March dispositions.—Meanwhile the Crown Prince of Prussia had encountered far more serious difficulties, for the defiles of the Riesen Gebirge had proved to be even more formidable than had been anticipated, and no generalship, however poor, could deprive them of their natural defensive strength. For the passage of the 2nd Army through the mountains three roads were to be utilized. On the northern or right flank was the 1st Corps, followed by the cavalry; in the centre was the Guard Corps; on the southern or left flank was the 5th Corps, to be followed later by the 6th. These three bodies were directed upon Trautenau, Braunau, and Nachod respectively. At Braunau the frontier of Bohemia forms a pronounced salient some twenty miles in depth, and to defend or to block the mouth of the pass it would have been necessary for the Austrians to push out a detached force to an exposed position in front of the main army. Such a proceeding must have been attended by considerable risk and, in the opinion of the Prussian commanders, was hardly likely to be attempted. Hence it followed that the central column would, in all probability, encounter far less opposition than the troops on its right and left;

and the Guard Corps was, therefore, to be prepared to move to the assistance either of the 1st or the 5th Corps should the necessity arise. On the 26th June, the day upon which the advanced guard of the 1st Army had its first brush with the enemy at Hühnerwasser, the Crown Prince's troops, eager to cross the frontier, which was only a few miles distant, were disposed as follows :—

1st Corps.—1st Division, Liebau ; 2nd Division, Schomberg.

Guard Corps.—1st Division, Dittersbach ; 2nd Division, Pickau.

5th Corps.—Reinerz.

6th Corps.—11th Division, Glatz ; 12th Division, Landeck.

Cavalry Division.—Waldenburg.

Distribution of Austrian troops, 26th June.—At the moment when the Crown Prince of Prussia was completing his preparations for crossing the mountain passes into Bohemia, the main Austrian army was still straggling out over more than forty miles of country. At the head of this long column one brigade of the 10th Corps had been pushed out beyond Königinhof towards Trautenau, the remainder of the corps being at Jaromir ; the 1st Heavy Cavalry Division was at Skalitz ; the 4th Corps at Lancow, about half-way between Josefstadt and Miletin ; the 6th Corps was at Opocno ; the 3rd Corps at Königgrätz ; the 8th at Tynist ; the 2nd Corps and 2nd Light Cavalry Division were at Senftenberg,¹ and the 2nd and 3rd Heavy Cavalry Divisions and the Reserve Artillery were still further to the south. As early as 4.30 p.m. on the 25th, and all

¹ Senftenberg lies a little to the north of a village of the name of Gabel. It is just possible that a confusion of the two Gabels misled the Prussians into the belief that the 2nd Corps had joined the 1st Army. See p. 39.

through the 26th, accurate reports of the Prussian movements kept coming in to von Benedek, whose head-quarters were at Josefstadt. These reports left no doubt either as to the dispositions or the intentions of the enemy. It was clear that he was advancing to the attack by three separate roads, and that for the time being his columns must be isolated in the mountains. This information was not considered by von Benedek to be of sufficient importance to justify him in making any real change in his own plans, and he still clung to his original idea of a concentration of his entire force on the right bank of the Elbe, between Jaromir and Miletin. The whole question was one of time. If the Prussians could be delayed long enough for the straggling rear divisions to close up to the front all might be well; but von Benedek, always optimistic and always leisurely, showed no appreciation of the speed with which the crisis of the campaign was approaching.

Von Benedek's orders for the 27th June.—To hold the hostile columns in check the 6th Corps, strengthened by the addition of the 1st Light Cavalry Division, was ordered to take up a position near Skalitz on the 27th, and to push out an advanced guard towards Nachod. Similarly, the 10th Corps, which was expressly ordered to march at 8 a.m., “after the morning meal,” was to occupy Trautenau, and it likewise was to send forward an advanced guard. Meanwhile the remaining corps were to continue their movement towards the Elbe in the same stately manner as before.¹ “These dispositions,” wrote the Austrian

¹ These orders underwent considerable modification on the morning of the 27th. The 8th Corps, which was to have taken the place of the 10th Corps, was then diverted eastward to support the 6th Corps; and at the same time the 4th Corps (less one brigade) was ordered to hold itself in readiness to move in the same direction.

commander to an officer on the staff of the Emperor, "mean no more than a momentary postponement of the offensive operations which I propose to undertake so soon as the concentration of my army is complete, and whenever I have reliable information as to the position occupied by my adversary ; which, I trust, will be the case in a few days."

The Austrian point of concentration too far north.— Here, as before, we see the same failure to appreciate the vigour and rapidity of Prussian strategy ; always there is the same confidence that the enemy will acquiesce in whatever the Austrians may wish to do, the same disregard of the all-important factor of time. In the Austrian official account, von Benedek's generalship at this juncture has been criticized on the ground that his covering force, the 6th and 10th Corps, was too weak, and that it should have been supported by the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 8th Corps. That is to say, that the whole of the principal army would have been drawn into a conflict with the Crown Prince of Prussia, leaving Prince Frederick Charles to be opposed only by the 1st Corps and the Saxons. This argument is difficult to follow.

From the first von Benedek's proper policy had been to operate against the divided forces of the enemy and to beat them in detail. For this course to be successful, the first requisites were a vigorous offensive spirit coupled with rapidity of movement. Had he acted as the official historians suggest, he must have adopted, at a very early stage, a purely defensive attitude, which could lead to only one result. Von Benedek's course may have been wrong, but it was at least better than the alternative suggested. His real mistake was not in the actual plan, but in the fact that he did not realize that he would not be allowed the time in which to carry it out. By the evening of the 26th June

he should have recognized that his chosen point of concentration was too far north, that is to say, too near to the enemy, and some less distant spot, Königgrätz or Pardubitz, should have been substituted for Josefstadt. His best chance was to strike; but until his concentration was completed he was powerless, and everything depended upon his ability to draw together his scattered corps. Until this primary object had been achieved it was useless to think vaguely of offensive action; but by his persistence in attempting to reach Josefstadt von Benedek exposed himself unnecessarily to the danger of having a portion of his force severely handled before the remainder could come to his assistance. Even on the morning of the 27th June, when he heard that Nachod had been occupied by a strong force of all arms, the Austrian Commander-in-Chief saw no reason to modify his plans. It required something more than this to convince him of his error.

The battle of Trautenau.—The Crown Prince of Prussia's orders for the 27th June were: 1st Corps to push beyond Trautenau towards Arnau; Guard Corps to reach Eipel and Kosteletz; 5th Corps to Nachod. A serious conflict on the frontier was therefore inevitable. On this day the 1st Corps marched at first on two roads; at 8 a.m. the left column reached Parschnitz, where it awaited the arrival of the right column, which had been directed to provide the advanced guard of the united corps. In this way more than an hour was wasted, and it was nearly 10 a.m. when the leading troops discovered that the bridge over the Aupa at Trautenau was barricaded and lightly held by the dragoons of the famous Windischgrätz Regiment. A sharp fight in the streets resulted in favour of the Prussians, but the long delay at Parschnitz had given the Austrians time to bring up General Mondel's brigade from Praussnitz-Kaile. Marching at 6.30 a.m.,

this brigade was still about a mile and a half short of Trautenau when the Prussians debouched from the mountains, and but for a fortunate accident it might never have reached its allotted position. As it was, however, Mondel was able to establish himself on the heights which dominate the valley of the Aupa just as the hostile advanced guard issued from the little town below him. The Prussian commander, General von Bonin,¹ soon perceived that the position which lay in his front, barring the only road by which he could rejoin the Guard and 5th Corps, was too formidable to be taken by his advanced guard alone, and summoned six battalions from his main body, which was still about Parschnitz, to make a turning movement against the enemy's right flank. The distance to be covered by the flank attack was barely two miles, but the hills were steep and rugged, and in many places were thickly wooded ; moreover, the day was hot and the men had been under arms since 4 a.m. In the circumstances it is not surprising that progress was slow, and it was not until 1 p.m. that the battalions of the main body were able to give any material aid to the advanced guard. Meanwhile General Gablenz, the commander of the Austrian 10th Corps, had arrived upon the scene, and finding his advanced brigade hard pressed in front and in danger of being cut off, gave orders for a retreat upon Hohenbruck and Alt-Rognitz. The Prussians followed up, but about 3 p.m., owing partly to the exhaustion of the attacking infantry, but more to General Bonin's belief that his enemy was thoroughly beaten, the engagement came temporarily to an end. The cessation was not of long duration. The main body of the 10th Corps was hastening to the front

¹ General von Bonin commanded the Prussian 1st Corps, but, seeing that fighting was imminent, had taken his place with the advanced guard.

from Jaromir, and at 2.30 p.m. the leading brigade, Colonel Grivicic, was close to Alt-Rognitz. His first attack met with a heavy repulse, but a second effort, better prepared than the first, won some success. About 4 p.m. General Wimpffen's brigade joined in the fight, and being well supported by their artillery, the Austrians gradually overpowered and drove back their weaker foe. Soon after 5 p.m. yet another Austrian brigade, General Knebel's, came up from the south, and the Prussians, fighting with the utmost gallantry, were driven through and beyond Trautenau, and did not halt until they had recrossed the frontier and reached their bivouacs of the previous night near Liebau.

In this engagement the victorious Austrians lost 196 officers and more than 5500 men; while the defeated Prussians lost only 63 officers and 1200 men. This great disparity in the numbers of the killed and wounded on the two sides, which is equally apparent in almost every engagement of the campaign, must be ascribed principally to the vast superiority of the Prussian needle-gun over the Austrian muzzle-loader.¹ It would be difficult to find another case in European warfare where the loss of the victors has been more than four times as great as that of the vanquished.

Von Bonin's generalship.—Apart from this question of armament, the battle of Trautenau contains many points of interest. Taking first the Prussians; their reverse, which might well have proved more serious than it actually did, was directly due to von Bonin's failure to realize the strength of the opposition. In the first place, he declined the aid of the Guard Corps, which had been ordered to

¹ It was not only in rapidity of manipulation that the Prussians had an advantage; another great point in their favour was that the Austrians were obliged to stand up to reload, thereby offering an easy target.

hold itself in readiness to march, after issuing from the mountains at Braunau, to the assistance of either of the flank columns. If not required by them it was to make for Eipel. No appeal for assistance was received from right or left, but about midday heavy firing was heard in the direction of Trautenau. Acting in the true spirit of the instructions, the 1st Division was promptly sent off to the northward, and at 1 p.m. joined the main body of the right column at Parschnitz. At that moment the Prussians appeared to be everywhere successful, and the Guards were informed that their assistance would not be required. After halting for an hour they resumed their march on Eipel, where they arrived in the evening in entire ignorance of the change which had come over the whole situation on their right.

There is always something admirable in the conduct of a commander who refuses reinforcements in the belief that his own troops are sufficient for the work in hand. By accepting the proffered aid he runs the risk of taking men away from another whose need may be greater than his own. In this case von Bonin knew that the Crown Prince wished the Guards to reach Eipel if possible, and unless obliged to do so he was unwilling to divert them from their objective. Had his decision been based upon a true appreciation of the situation in his immediate front there would have been but little ground for criticism, even though the event had proved him to be wrong. In fact, however, his action was based upon an unwarranted assumption that he would not be called upon to deal with anything more than an outpost ; and this same over-confidence led him to commit a far graver error. "In war," said Nelson, "I count nothing well done so long as anything remains to do." Von Bonin was not Nelson. When the sound of firing died away about 3 p.m. the

Prussian commander rashly concluded that his tired troops might safely be allowed to rest, whereas his task was but half accomplished. His duty was to get his main body clear of the Parschnitz defile, and no respite should have been granted until every man had been pushed through Trautenau. Towards evening his error, and the danger of taking anything for granted, was rudely brought home to him, but had he acted with ordinary prudence, one might almost say in accordance with the accepted principles of war, he would have been perfectly able to cope with the Austrian counter-attack.

Was pursuit possible?—If the Prussian commander brought the reverse upon himself, he was saved from a worse fate by the indirect pressure brought to bear upon his foe by the very troops whose direct aid he had declined. Having hurled the enemy back across the frontier, von Gablenz contented himself with halting for the night on the line of the Aupa. For this he has been freely blamed, but the difficulty of his situation has not always been frankly stated. In summing up the position the Prussian official history says: "He [Gablenz] was unwilling to run the risk of compromising, by a fresh undertaking, the success he had already obtained. This determination had a decisive influence on the subsequent operations, although in other points the fortune of war had been in favour of the Austrians."¹ But was it really so easy as this passage would seem to imply for von Gablenz to follow up his success? Irrespective of von Benedek's

¹ This passage is quoted by General Bonnal in *Sadowa*, English translation, p. 92. The author adds: "Even the pursuit of the 1st Corps alone on the night of the 27th-28th could, in spite of the reverse of Nachod, have retarded by some days the arrival of the 2nd Army on the Elbe, and enabled Benedek to move, with all his forces united, to meet Prince Frederick Charles, taking as his line Josefstadt—Gitschin—Turnau."

instructions that the frontier was not to be crossed, there were other difficulties in the way. His leading brigade, Mondel's, had marched from Praussnitz-Kaile early that morning, and fighting did not cease until 9.30 p.m. The other brigades had been worked almost as hard; so that there seems to be at least some justification for the Austrian statement that, "owing to the fatigue of the troops and to the darkness of the night there was no pursuit."¹ But there was more than this. During the day preceding the encounter von Gablenz had been summoned to Josefstadt, and had there received verbal orders for the occupation of Trautenau. From the known positions of the enemy at and near the Braunau pass, it was clear to the commander of the 10th Corps that his right flank would be much exposed. This view of the case he ventured to express to the Commander-in-Chief, who, however, took a more optimistic view of the situation. On the morning of the 27th von Gablenz again represented the danger in which he must be placed by the withdrawal of the cavalry from Nachod; but again his superior was unconvinced. The result showed which of the two had formed the sounder judgment. The Prussian Guard Corps issued unopposed from Braunau and made its way, almost without firing a shot, to Eipel. There it was well placed to threaten the right and rear of the Austrian 10th Corps, and this danger must have been further increased had von Gablenz pushed across the frontier in pursuit. The fact would appear to be that the Braunau pass had to some extent been overlooked by the Commander-in-Chief. Owing to the conformation of the frontier this pass was difficult to watch; at the same time it should not have been neglected; but von Benedek seems to have assumed that danger was only to be feared from the direction of Nachod. So long as that was held,

¹ Austrian Official Account, Vol. III, p. 80.

he assumed that the 10th Corps would have nothing to fear except from the enemy in its front, the Prussian right column. The real fault lay, therefore, with the supreme command rather than with von Gablenz, who was pushed forward into an exposed position and has been criticized for not going further. It is always easier to criticize than to act.¹

The action at Soor, 28th June.—The case can be tested by what actually happened on the following day. In concluding his report to his chief upon the action of Trautenau, von Gablenz wrote: "Since I am threatened in rear and on the right flank, and seeing that my troops, all of whom have been under fire, are thoroughly exhausted, I request most urgently that Praussnitz-Kaile should be occupied by a strong detachment." He knew, or thought he knew, that four battalions and four guns were already in that village, and on hearing that in compliance with his demand two more battalions had been sent, he concluded that his retreat upon Josefstadt was more or less secured. In this belief he prepared again to meet the attack of the Prussian 1st Corps, but at 7.30 a.m. he was ordered to retire upon Praussnitz. Believing the roads to be clear, and that a friendly force was watching in the direction of Eipel, he sent off his baggage trains and ammunition park under a weak escort, followed by the reserve artillery and the main body of his infantry. Colonel Grivicic's brigade, which had passed the night on the Katzauer Berg, was to march by Alt-Rognitz towards the Eipel road. Should the enemy be found advancing on Kaile, Colonel Grivicic was to fall upon his right flank; should no enemy be encountered, this brigade was to take up a position covering

¹ It has been suggested that in deciding to push the 10th Corps forward to Trautenau, von Benedek was influenced by news, which ad just arrived, of the victory at Custoza.

Kaile and to act as the advanced guard of the 10th Corps. The whole of the dispositions for retreat were based upon the understanding that Praussnitz-Kaile was securely held; but the fact was that the original four battalions and four guns were in Ober-Praussnitz, a village some ten miles further west, and that the order to the other two battalions had been countermanded. Von Gablenz's dangerous flank therefore lay entirely open to attack from the direction of Eipel, a state of affairs of which he was first made aware by a report from his baggage escort that detachments of hostile cavalry had been seen close to the line of march.

The horsemen who appeared thus suddenly upon the flank of the retreating Austrians belonged to the advanced guard of the Prussian Guard Corps. At 1 a.m. on the 28th the Crown Prince of Prussia heard for the first time of the reverse to the 1st Corps. Thinking that von Bonin would renew the engagement on the earliest opportunity, he promptly issued the following order: "As the result of the action of the 1st Corps at Trautenau is undecided, the Guard Corps will continue its march in the direction already ordered as far as Kaile; if the action at Trautenau be still going on, it will then march on that place and engage the enemy without delay. The Guard Corps will start as soon as possible." At 5 a.m., the exact hour at which von Benedek issued his orders for the retreat of the 10th Corps, the 1st Division of the Prussian Guards, followed by the 2nd Division, crossed the Aupa at Eipel and threw out mounted patrols. The first reports which were received were to the effect that columns of the enemy were advancing from Königinhof towards Trautenau and Eipel. The Guard Corps, it must be remembered, was completely isolated from the columns to right and left, and this news was considered so serious that the leading division was ordered to halt "in a suitable position" until

the situation could be cleared up. The only "suitable position" appeared to be behind the Aupa, and the troops had actually begun to fall back when it was discovered that the reports were false, and that long lines of Austrian baggage wagons were moving from Trautenau in the direction of Königshof. The retreat was stopped and the Prussian advanced guard was hurried forward, but the delay had enabled von Gablenz to divert his baggage off the main road in the direction of Pilnikau. The only infantry immediately available was von Gablenz's personal escort and the baggage guards, but the reserve artillery was coming to hand, and as battery after battery arrived it opened fire against the hostile advanced guard. The Prussians promptly advanced to the attack, but were met in the woods north and north-east of Kaile by von Knebel's brigade, which had been got into position in the nick of time. The ground favoured the assailants, and the Austrians were soon driven back to a second position near Burkersdorf. For a time von Gablenz hoped that by passing the main body of his infantry, Mondel's and Wimpffen's brigades, in rear of von Knebel, he might yet make good his retreat; but just as he was about to make the attempt he heard that Praussnitz-Kaile was already in the hands of the enemy. His worst fears were realized, for his communications with Josefstadt were cut.

At this moment, about 11 a.m., the 2nd Division of the Prussian Guard Corps was still filing over the Aupa bridge at Eipel, and it would almost seem as though a vigorous counter-attack by the Austrian infantry, of which three brigades were at hand, might have saved the day. But the men were weary, and the commander, thinking only of retreat, ordered General Wimpffen and Colonel Mondel to follow the baggage across country in the direction of Pilnikau. In this way von Knebel's brigade was left

to bear almost the whole weight of the Prussian attack, and before long it found itself engaged with the entire 1st Guard Division. The inevitable result followed. In a very short time von Knebel was driven through and beyond Burkersdorf, and was in full retreat towards Pilnikau. Meanwhile one Prussian battalion had lost touch with the troops on its left, and had found a quantity of Austrian baggage and part of Mondel's rearguard in the neighbourhood of Neu Rognitz.¹ Here the advantage was with the Austrians, but although they succeeded in covering the withdrawal of the baggage, this minor success in no way affected the general issue. By 1 p.m. the Prussians were in undisputed possession of the battlefield, but as they were too much fatigued to press on in pursuit the Austrians were able to draw off in comparatively good order. The three brigades joined hands at Pilnikau, whence they marched to Neuschloss, where they crossed to the right bank of the Elbe. There they were once more in safety, at all events for a time, but a certain amount of baggage had been lost, and it was not until 9 p.m. that the last detachments rejoined their units.

A far more serious disaster had overtaken von Gablenz's remaining brigade. The order to march by the Alt-Rognitz road did not reach Colonel Grivicic until 9.30 a.m., although it had been dispatched nearly two hours earlier. The second order, telling him to retire on Pilnikau and to join the rest of the corps, was only sent off at 11 a.m., and by that time the head of the brigade was on the high ground above Alt-Rognitz, where it was detected by the Prussian scouts. The commander of the Prussian 2nd Guard Division immediately detached one battalion to deal with this new enemy which was threatening his right flank, and by mid-day the two forces were in contact about a mile south-east

¹ On the Trautenau road, about 1000 yards north of Burkersdorf.

of Alt-Rognitz. The Prussians attacked with the greatest vigour, but the odds against them were too great, and in a few moments these and a second battalion which had come up in support were pushed back with heavy loss. Thinking that he was engaged with the head of the Guard Corps, Colonel Grivicic then threw forward his own right, with a view to interposing between the enemy and the main body of von Gablenz's corps, which he believed to be marching upon Kaile, for no information to the contrary had as yet reached him. His intention was good ; but in carrying it into effect he exposed his own right to attack by the main body of the 2nd Guard Division, which had already passed across his front. From the woods which lay to the west of the position which he had taken up a heavy fire was opened against his flank, and immediately afterwards another force of the enemy appeared almost in his rear. The surprise was complete and disastrous. The Austrian left wing fought hard, but the right and centre were completely shattered. About 3 p.m. the brigadier was wounded, and the defeat became a rout. Without artillery or cavalry to cover the retreat, or any means of forming an effective rearguard, the infantry soon lost all semblance of cohesion, and of the whole brigade, which had gone into action nearly 6000 strong, not more than 2000 rejoined the main body of the corps at Pilnikau and Neuschloss.

Thus ended the action of Soor, in which the Austrians lost all, and more than all, that they had gained at Trautenau on the previous day. Eight guns had fallen into the hands of the enemy, and 123 officers and 3696 men were killed, wounded, or missing, chiefly from Grivicic's unfortunate brigade ; while the Prussian loss amounted to no more than 28 officers and 685 men.

Seeing what actually occurred on this day, we may again

ask whether von Gablenz would have been well advised to follow up his success against the 1st Corps at Trautenau, even had his instructions permitted him to do so. Notwithstanding the criticisms of General Bonnal and the Prussian official history, the answer must surely be in the negative. As it was he experienced the greatest difficulty in rejoining the main body, and had he pushed on in pursuit of the Prussian 1st Corps it is more than possible that he would have found himself entirely cut off.

Unfortunately for von Gablenz's reputation as a commander, it is impossible to find any excuse for the final disaster to Grivicic's brigade, and for that he must bear the entire blame. He knew that there was a strong hostile force in the neighbourhood of Eipel; but believing that Praussnitz-Kaile was held by Austrian troops, he attempted to withdraw through that village upon Königinhof, although in doing so he must pass within four miles of the enemy. To protect his main body during this dangerous march he detached a flank guard of one infantry brigade, but failed to provide it either with cavalry or artillery, although it was almost certain to be opposed to a force of all three arms. Worse than all was the failure to ensure proper communication between the two columns. The order for the march took nearly two hours to reach Grivicic, with the result that the main body was well on the road while the flank guard was still in its bivouacs, and the order to retreat never reached its destination at all. It would appear, therefore, that the most ordinary military precautions would have prevented the disaster. In the first place, a route more remote from the enemy should have been selected; secondly, the flank guard and the main body should have moved simultaneously, and the closest possible communication should have been maintained between them throughout.

Before nightfall the head-quarters of the Prussian Guard Corps were established at Trautenau and communication was reopened with the 1st Corps, whose way into Bohemia was now cleared of all opposition.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRUSSIAN 5TH CORPS—NACHOD AND SKALITZ

MAP 2

By the action of Soor on the 28th June the passage of the Prussian right and central columns through the Riesen Gebirge was definitely secured, but in the meantime the left column, the 5th Corps, had been thrown entirely upon its own resources and, but for the resolute leadership of General von Steinmetz, the Prussian arms might have experienced another check, more serious than that at Trautenau. Here, as at Braunau and Parschnitz, the rapidity of their movements enabled the Prussians to make good their foothold in Bohemia before any very formidable force could be brought against them. By the evening of the 26th June their advanced guard had brushed aside a weak detachment which was watching the frontier, and before night eight companies of Prussian infantry were established in Nachod, the Austrians falling back in front of them to Kosteletz. It was the news of this movement which caused von Benedek to direct his 6th Corps from Opocno to Skalitz with orders to throw forward an advanced guard to Nachod.¹ This order was sent off from the Commander-in-Chief's head-quarters at 8 p.m. on the 26th, but did not reach its destination until 1.30 a.m. on the 27th. As was almost inevitable, some delay occurred

¹ See p. 54.

in communicating with the troops, but by 5.30 a.m. the last brigade was on the march.

Nachod, 27th June.—Meanwhile the Prussians were pushing forward as speedily as possible so as to get clear of the mountains before they could be opposed. Von Steinmetz himself reached Nachod soon after 8 a.m., and a little while later his advanced guard, which was engaged in preparing bivouacs for the main body, reported that strong hostile columns of all arms had reached Prowodow. The Nachod defile was still choked with artillery and baggage, and only a few battalions of infantry, three squadrons and a battery, had reached the open country. Any hesitation would have been as fatal to the Prussians as was the delay of the 1st Corps at Parschnitz, but on the first report that the enemy was advancing, General von Löwenfeld, the commander of the advanced guard, threw his leading troops into a plantation north of Wenzelsberg and opened fire with his artillery. The Austrians seized the church of Wenzelsberg, which lies at the south-west corner of the village, and the main body of Colonel Hertwegh's brigade was on the point of attacking the enemy in the wood when a heavy fire was opened against its own right by a Prussian battalion which had hastened forward from the Nachod-Neustadt road. Aided by the immense superiority of their weapons, the Prussians first forced back the leading Austrian brigade, and then held their own for some three hours against the steadily increasing numbers of the enemy. Moving by several roads and over the more open ground, the Austrians reached the scene of fighting far more quickly than the Prussians, and soon after 11 a.m. von Ramming was able to throw almost his whole weight, including a very superior artillery, against the weak advanced guard.

Contesting every foot of ground, the Prussians were

pushed back across the Neustadt road to the very edge of the plateau which there begins to drop down to the River Mettau. It was one of those crucial moments which are pregnant with great events. A thin line of Prussian infantry, not more than seven battalions, without reserves, was face to face with an Austrian corps. On its right was a cavalry brigade (Wnuck's), and behind a confused mass of men, guns, horses, and wagons blocked the road. The transport had been hastily pushed on one side to make way for the fighting units, but it was doubtful whether they could reach the front in time to save the situation. A less resolute commander than von Steinmetz might have decided to retire before it was too late, but the commander of the 5th Corps had told the Guard Division that he had no need of assistance, and he meant to keep his word. His confidence in the stanchness of his advanced guard was justified. First the right of the enemy's attack was repulsed with heavy loss by the fire of the needle-gun ; then the Prussian horsemen charged and overthrew Prince Sohms' cavalry brigade near Wysokow. This charge decided the day. To protect themselves against the victorious cavalry the Austrian battalions formed square, and thus presented so vulnerable a target to the fire of the infantry that they were soon forced to seek shelter in the woods from which the Prussians had lately been driven. By this time the head of the 10th Division had begun to debouch from the defile, and the hardly pressed Prussian line, now supported by a considerable artillery, in its turn assumed the offensive. Led by von Steinmetz, the whole of the 5th Corps rushed to the attack. At first the Austrians fell back in some confusion, but the opportune arrival of their reserve artillery checked the advance and enabled the infantry to make good its retreat to Skalitz.

The Austrian losses during the day amounted to 5719

of all ranks, killed, wounded, and prisoners, while those of the Prussians were no more than 1122. In addition, the Austrians lost eight guns.¹

The effect on the general situation.—The victory of Nachod was of the utmost importance to the Prussian arms. A defeat there as well as at Trautenau would have been fatal; for with both the flanking corps in difficulties it would not have been possible for the Guard Corps to advance in the centre. For some days, at all events, the Crown Prince's army would have been held fast in the mountains, von Benedek would have gained the necessary time to complete his concentration, and would have been able to carry out his plan of falling upon Prince Frederick Charles. That none of these things actually happened was due in the first instance to von Steinmetz's resolute leadership, and in a less degree to the superior tactical training and armament of his troops. The co-operation between the various arms was thorough and effective, and was in marked contrast to the individuality of the Austrian leadership.

The handling of the Austrian advanced guard.—On the side of the Austrians, this action furnishes a good example of a difficult and important point in the handling of advanced guards. On reaching the village of Wrchowin, Colonel Hertwegh, whose brigade headed the march, heard that the enemy was on the Nachod road. He then had to decide whether he should or should not deliver an attack without waiting for the main body of the corps. By doing so he would expose his own brigade to defeat before it could be supported and he might at the same time bring

¹ These figures are taken from the Austrian official returns. The Prussian account gives the Austrian losses as 235 officers and 7275 men, including 2500 prisoners. Of the cavalry the Austrians lost 190 men and the Prussians 169.

on a general engagement, for which his chief was not prepared. On the other hand, he knew that the object of his march was to deny the mouth of the pass to the enemy. Owing to indifferent staff work, his route had twice been crossed by another brigade and there had been much delay. If he should wait to be reinforced the enemy would certainly gather strength, and might be able to establish himself securely on the Bohemian side of the mountains. Strong arguments could be advanced in favour either of fighting or of waiting. Hertwegh decided to fight; he was beaten before the arrival of the other brigades, and took but little part in the main action which followed; but notwithstanding this unfortunate result, he was right to act as he did. He ran certain risks; but at the beginning of the day the enemy was no stronger than himself, and he had far more to gain by a success than he could possibly lose by a reverse. It was only reasonable to assume that the Prussians were streaming through the pass close behind their advanced guard, and the odds in favour of an Austrian victory could hardly be improved by delay. The soldier who declines an action in such circumstances is not fitted for the responsibilities of command.

Von Benedek's orders for the 28th.—When the sound of battle died away on the evening of the 27th June, it was evident to von Ramming that the respite was only temporary; moreover, he knew that his corps was too much shaken to renew the conflict on the morrow with any chance of success. Behind him, however, stood the 8th Corps, and in his reports both to the Archduke Leopold and to the Commander-in-Chief he begged that he might be reinforced without delay. It was not, however, any part of von Benedek's plan to offer serious resistance east of the Elbe. Adhering steadfastly to his original intention, his orders for the 28th were that, if the enemy did not attack

before 2 p.m., both the 6th and the 8th Corps were to retire to the right bank of the river, covered by the 4th and 10th Corps. In carrying out these orders the 10th Corps met with a disaster at Soor, and the 8th Corps was hardly more fortunate. It seems strange that von Benedek should still have thought it possible that the Prussians would wait until 2 p.m. before making a move, but from the first he had brought himself to believe that the enemy would act as he wished. The orders were issued at 5.30 a.m., and almost immediately afterwards von Benedek went off towards Skalitz to see for himself the true state of affairs in that direction. Reaching Trebesow about 9.30 a.m., he found that the 8th Corps, acting upon his orders of the previous evening, had almost completely relieved the 6th in front of the enemy, and that the latter corps was already established in the second line. About the same hour three brigades and the reserve artillery of the 4th Corps reached Dolan. From Trebesow the Commander-in-Chief made his way to Skalitz, where he heard that small bodies of the enemy had been seen on the hills two miles to the north-west. Hitherto there had been no sign of any hostile movement in force, but artillery fire, gradually increasing in intensity, could be heard from the direction in which the enemy had been reported. According to his usual habit, von Benedek interpreted these signs in a manner favourable to his own intentions, and came to the conclusion that the Prussians were moving to their right to get into touch with the corps that had come through the Braunau Pass. Acting upon this assumption, he ordered the 6th and 8th Corps to begin the retreat to the Elbe.

The action at Skalitz, 28th June.—It was now a little after 11 a.m., and so far from moving away to his right, von Steinmetz had just completed his dispositions for an attack with his whole force (which had been strengthened

by the arrival of one brigade of the 6th Corps). One brigade was directed against the Austrian left, while the main body was to march straight down the Wysokow-Skalitz high road; the brigade from the 6th Corps was in echelon on the left between Wysokow and Wenzelsberg, but its commander was given complete freedom to come into action whenever he should judge it necessary to do so. These dispositions were made under the impression that a large part of the Guard Corps would be available on this day, but just as the infantry attack was about to begin, von Steinmetz, who was at Studnitz, was informed by the Crown Prince that owing to the reverse to the 1st Corps at Trautenau, all that could be spared was a cavalry brigade. This news necessitated a slight modification of the original plan, but the delay, if any, was of no importance. The Austrian retirement had actually begun when half a battalion of Prussian infantry was seen to be issuing from the western border of a wood which lies just south of the eminence upon which the Prussian monument now stands.¹ It was at once attacked, and the retreating troops promptly faced about and resumed their former stations. A furious fight ensued, in which the Austrians at first gained some slight advantage, but the superiority of the Prussian needle-gun quickly asserted itself. A whole Austrian brigade was soon engaged in the wood, and at the railway embankment a little to the south. There it was received by a violent fire from well-placed Prussian infantry and its ranks were decimated. The brigadier and many of his officers were struck down, and not a few of the men sought safety in flight.

To rescue these unfortunate regiments a second brigade came forward, with the result that the Prussians were

¹ This eminence lies north of the railway, about half a mile due south of Zblow.

very hardly pressed. It was a case of numbers against armament; moreover, the Austrian artillery, which was posted in two lines north and south of Skalitz, at first held the upper hand. Fortunately for the Prussians, von Hoffmann, who commanded the brigade of the 6th Corps, had availed himself at a very early stage of the latitude permitted him by his orders, and had sent forward two battalions to the assistance of the advanced guard. Even with this reinforcement six half-battalions were all that were available to meet the attack of the second Austrian brigade. The thin Prussian line was dangerously extended to avoid envelopment, and the enemy advanced until at one point the lines were no more than fifty paces apart. A third Austrian brigade was close at hand, and had it been thrown into the fight the Prussians must have been forced back. But the support was not forthcoming; before the fire of the needle-gun the attacking lines halted and wavered; two or three more volleys were poured into them, and then they broke and fled in disorder to the railway station. It was now about 12.30 p.m., and until this hour the whole fighting had been sustained by the Prussian advanced guard and the flanking detachment. The main body, that is, the 10th Division, had not left the neighbourhood of Wysokow until about 8 a.m., and had then marched by Starkotz to Zblow. There the division deployed, under a heavy fire of artillery, facing southward. As the woods were found to be filled with the men of the 9th Division, the march was continued towards Zlitsch, which was already occupied by Prussian troops. The Austrian left was then turned, but the situation was saved by the artillery, which prevented the further advance of the hostile infantry. A fierce artillery duel ensued, in the course of which the village of Kleny was set on fire. Profiting by the relief

afforded to him by his guns, the Archduke Leopold seized this opportunity to break off an engagement which had been begun against his wishes and the orders of his chief.

The Austrian retreat.—This difficult operation was accomplished with greater ease than might have been expected. The Austrians had been very severely handled. In front of them was a victorious enemy ; behind them was the River Aupa. Fortunately, however, the retreat, which began about 1 p.m., was hardly interfered with at all. Three battalions, supported by the artillery, were left in the station and village of Skalitz to cover the crossing of the river, and most gallantly they performed their task. Until 3 p.m. the fight raged round the station, and then the Austrians fell back to the houses, each one of which had to be separately cleared. Thanks to this rearguard action, the main body was able to shake off the enemy and to get clear away to Trebesow, where it found the last brigade of the 6th Corps on the point of marching off to the Elbe. On learning how the day had gone, the commander of this brigade, General Rozenweig, turned about and took up a position behind which the shattered 8th Corps was able to re-form before continuing its retreat. A Prussian detachment was pushed out west of Skalitz, but finding the road barred by fresh troops, bivouacked for the night on the right bank of the Aupa. Von Steinmetz established his head-quarters in Skalitz. In this engagement the losses were even heavier than at Nachod, and considerably greater than at Trautenau ; those of the Austrians amounting to 205 officers and 5372 men,¹ and of the Prussians to 62 officers and 1303 men. Six guns fell into the hands of the victors.

¹ Austrian Official Account, Vol. III, p. 101. The Prussian official account gives the Austrian losses as 5899, including 2500 prisoners.

The Prussian 2nd Army reunited. Von Benedek's false strategy.—The double victory of the 28th June, Soor and Skalitz, enabled the Crown Prince of Prussia to reunite the three forces into which he had been compelled to subdivide his army while passing through the mountains. A delicate and difficult operation had been skilfully performed, and the result was a triumph for that offensive spirit which the genius of von Moltke had instilled into every rank in the army. At the same time, the principal blame for the Austrian failure must be laid at the door of the Commander-in-Chief. On the morning of the 28th three Austrian corps, the 4th, 6th, and 8th, were assembled at Dolan, Trebesow, and Skalitz. From Dolan to Skalitz is no more than four miles, and in front of this formidable force lay the Prussian 5th Corps and a brigade of the 6th Corps. The situation was one which demanded vigorous offensive action. It is true that to the west the 1st Corps and the Saxons were falling back in front of Prince Frederick Charles, but nothing had occurred to justify von Benedek in the line which he adopted. The safety of his concentration depended entirely upon his power of preserving his freedom to manœuvre, and this could only be achieved by keeping the Prussian armies far apart and securing for himself an ample field of operation. Trautenau had done much to attain this end, and although Nachod had resulted in a Prussian victory, von Steinmetz and the 5th Corps were almost without support on the following morning. It is difficult to imagine a situation more favourable for a vigorous counter-stroke by a general acting upon interior lines. The necessary troops were at hand, and there was no obstacle to their free movement. Nevertheless von Benedek deliberately chose to retreat, and in so doing exposed two of his corps, the 10th at Soor and the 8th at Skalitz, to defeat in detail. He reaped his reward.

The action at Schweinschädel, 29th June.—Although the opposition which had been experienced by the Prussian 2nd Army in passing through the Riesen Gebirge had been far less formidable than it must have been had the Austrians been more fortunate in their commander, it had been sufficient to cause a slight modification in von Moltke's plans. It had been found necessary to move the point of junction of the two armies somewhat to the east of Gitschin, and, as will be remembered, Prince Frederick Charles had been called upon to "disengage" the Crown Prince. The principal objective of the armies was, however, unaltered, and on the morning of the 29th the Crown Prince continued his converging march in the direction of Königshof. On his right the 1st Corps passed through Trautenau, the scene of its reverse only forty-eight hours earlier, to Pilnikau; and in the centre the Guard Corps, after a sharp fight, drove two and a half Austrian battalions from Königshof, where it then bivouacked. On the left the 5th Corps encountered more serious opposition. After their exertions of the two previous days von Steinmetz's men required rest, and no move was made from Skalitz until 2 p.m. In front of them the Austrian 4th Corps lay round Dolan, and the morning was spent by both sides in reconnaissance. At that hour the Prussian main body marched directly upon Waternik, while a flank guard was thrown out to the west, with orders to rejoin near Miskoles.

This body found the enemy deployed on a line from the Aupa valley through Schweinschädel to Sebutz, and came under fire from some batteries which were in position near the former village. The flank guard steadily pursued its march towards Miskoles covered only by the Fusilier battalion of the 52nd Regiment, a weak detachment of the 47th, and some artillery. The sound of the firing reached the main body, and the advanced guard, after

passing through Weternik, turned southward towards Miskoles. A sharp engagement ensued, in which the Austrians were worsted and driven out of Schweinschädel. The somewhat risky flank march across the Austrian front was then secure, and as von Steinmetz's intention was to reach Gradlitz rather than to inflict defeat upon the enemy, he ordered the march to be resumed at the earliest possible moment, covered by the cavalry. Similarly, Count Festetics, the commander of the Austrian 4th Corps, was resolved to do nothing which might imperil the safety of his retreat to the Elbe, and contented himself with a perfectly passive resistance. In this way the action came to an end about 7.30 p.m., by which time the Austrians had lost about 1500 men and, according to the Prussian account, about 3400 unwounded prisoners. The Prussian losses amounted to no more than 15 officers and 379 non-commissioned officers and men.

The 2nd Army on the line of the Elbe, 30th June.—Four days had now passed since the Crown Prince's army had crossed the frontier into Silesia. In that short space of time, and notwithstanding one serious reverse, he had met and repulsed four Austrian Corps, the 10th, 6th, 8th, and 4th, each of which had been exposed separately to his blows. Ten thousand prisoners had been taken, and twenty guns, five colours, and two standards were the trophies of his successive victories. By midnight of the 29th and 30th two of his corps, the Guard at Königinhof and the 5th at Gradlitz, were on the line of the upper Elbe; and two more, the 1st at Pilnikau and the 6th at Skalitz, were echeloned on the flanks. As usual with the Prussians in those days, we find the cavalry in rear of the infantry, and on this occasion it was at Praussnitz, where the Crown Prince had established his head-quarters. Having achieved so much, he was now content to wait until the advance

of the 1st Army should automatically open for him the bridges over the Elbe. His men were badly in need of a day's rest, and orders were given that on the 30th all serious engagements were to be avoided, but that each corps was to take precautions for its own security, to reconnoitre the passages over the river, and to prepare for a further advance on the 1st July.

These orders show that perfect co-operation between commanders and confidence in one another which was the basis of von Moltke's system. The Crown Prince knew no more of the movements of Prince Frederick Charles' army than that it had reached Turnau. Of the march to Gitschin he was ignorant, but the general plan of campaign was clear, and he was quite content to wait until the action of the 1st Army should enable him to cross the Elbe without fighting. His appreciation of the situation and his forecast of the general trend of events proved to be perfectly accurate.

Von Benedek's dispositions, 29th June. The retreat to Königgrätz.—By the evening of the 29th von Benedek had disposed four of his corps, the 2nd, 6th, 8th, and 10th, on the right bank of the Elbe, facing in a north-easterly direction towards the Crown Prince's army; the 4th Corps was believed to be at Dolan, the 3rd Corps was at Miletin, the 1st Corps and the Saxons were at Gitschin. As we have seen, the 4th Corps was compelled to evacuate its position, and during the night it also took post on the right bank of the Elbe, behind the 2nd Corps. This was followed by the disaster of Gitschin, which left von Benedek's left entirely in the air, and exposed to attack by Prince Frederick Charles. Before very long it became known at headquarters that the 1st Corps and the Saxons were in no fit state to face their victorious enemy; the 3rd Corps alone was unequal to the task, and at 3.30 p.m. on the 30th von

Benedek gave orders for a general retreat in the direction of Königgrätz. At last the truth had been brought home to him. His whole plan of campaign had crumbled. He had, it is true, effected his concentration behind the Elbe, but at a total cost of more than 30,000 of his men. He had failed to preserve a zone of manœuvre, and was in no condition to assume the offensive. The disasters of Soor, Nachod, and Skalitz had prevented him from sending the 3rd Corps to the assistance of the 1st Corps and the Saxons at Gitschin ; the disaster of Gitschin finally compelled his retreat, and, as had been foreseen both by von Moltke and the Crown Prince, opened the passages over the Elbe to the Prussian 2nd Army. Never have all the advantages which the possession of interior lines gives to the commander who knows how to use them been more completely thrown away.

CHAPTER VII

THE EVE OF KÖNIGGRÄTZ

MAP 3

The 1st and 2nd Prussian armies in touch.—The absence of the Prussian cavalry was never more severely felt than during the 30th June and following days. From the first the want of a thorough service of information, a defect which was again manifest in the early days of the 1870 war, had been the weak point in von Moltke's organization; after every engagement the Austrians had been able to shake themselves clear of their enemy, to recover some of their lost *morale*, and to re-form their units. Even after the demoralizing defeat at Gitschin, the Saxons and the Austrian 1st Corps were able to take shelter behind the 3rd Corps, and to make good their retreat, almost unmolested although in complete disorder, to Smidar and Sadowa. It was on this day, the 30th, that the King of Prussia, accompanied by von Moltke, left Berlin for the front. Before leaving the capital, news was received that the 2nd Army had reached the line of the Elbe, and during the journey the following telegram was dispatched from the wayside station of Kohlfurt:—

“The 2nd Army will hold its ground on the upper Elbe; its right wing will be prepared to effect a junction with the left wing of the 1st Army, by way of Königinhof, as the latter advances. The 1st Army will press on to Königgrätz without delay. Any forces of the enemy that may be on the right flank of this advance will be attacked by General

Herwath von Bittenfeld and driven away from the enemy's main body."

As we have seen, these instructions had been anticipated almost to the letter both by the Crown Prince and by Prince Frederick Charles. The former stood fast on the left bank of the Elbe, whence some of his artillery exchanged a desultory and almost innocuous cannonade with the Austrian 2nd Corps; the latter, after the severe night fighting, was unable to march until nearly 11 a.m., but at that hour he set his troops in motion in the direction which was subsequently indicated in the King's telegram. He also dispatched the 1st Regiment of Guard Dragoons towards Arnau, where it came into contact with the advanced guard of the 1st Corps. Although otherwise uneventful, the 30th June is, therefore, important as the day upon which direct communication was first established between the two Prussian armies.

The Austrians behind the Bistritz.—The Austrian retreat began at 1 a.m. on the 1st July, and was effected in four columns. During the morning the 1st Corps halted at Wsestar after its twenty-mile march—one might almost have said flight—with the Saxons on its left flank between Lubno and Nieder Prim; and in the course of the afternoon the remaining troops took post as follows:—

1st Light Cavalry Division, at Stezer, three miles west of Königgrätz.

3rd and 10th Corps, round Lipa, with the *3rd Reserve Cavalry Division* a little to the west and in touch with the Saxons.

6th Corps and 2nd Reserve Cavalry Division, behind the 10th Corps and in front of the 1st Corps.

4th and 8th Corps, round Nedelist.

2nd Corps, 1st Reserve, and 2nd Light Cavalry Divisions, on the right flank, near Trotina.

Von Benedek's correspondence with Vienna.—While his troops were gathering for battle on the high ground which lies between the Bistritz and the Elbe, the mental attitude of the Austrian Commander-in-Chief underwent a sudden and complete change. Hitherto a blind optimist, everything now appeared to him in the most dismal light, and as the troops marched to their positions, he telegraphed to the Emperor: "I entreat Your Majesty to make peace at any price. A disaster is inevitable." When this message reached Vienna the Emperor was still in ignorance of everything that had occurred since the 28th, but he fully realized that the advice tendered by von Benedek could not be followed. The temptation to replace him by a commander possessing greater moral courage must have been very strong, but instead of doing so, he merely replied, "To make peace now is out of the question. My orders are that, if nothing else can be done, you are to retreat in good order. Has there been a battle?" In an answering dispatch, which is too long for quotation, von Benedek described to his imperial master the demoralizing circumstances of his retreat and the pitiable condition of his army; but towards the end he appears to have recovered something of his self-control, for he suggested that, under favourable conditions, it might yet be possible for him to do something. Gradually, in the absence of any signs of the enemy, his confidence returned and, during the evening, orders were issued for the army to stand its ground on the morrow and for all the baggage to be passed across the Elbe. Meanwhile the Emperor had dispatched an officer of his personal staff to the front, and from him, as well as from von Benedek's reports, he was able to form an idea of the true state of affairs, with the result that Clam Gallas was removed from his command and Field-Marshal von Henikstein was replaced as Chief of the Staff by

General Baumgarten, who, however, did not reach headquarters until the morning of the 3rd July—the day of Königgrätz.

Prussian inactivity.—The correspondence which passed between Königgrätz and Vienna is sufficient evidence of the condition of the Austrian army on the 1st July, 1866. For some hours it was at the mercy of almost any force that had been able to attack, but, for want of a proper service of information, von Moltke allowed his opportunity to slip. Contact with the retreating enemy was lost during the night of the 30th, and on the following day the Prussian armies, ignorant of the Austrian movements, contented themselves with getting into closer touch with one another. The Crown Prince sent his 1st Corps from Arnau to Ober-Praussnitz, and Prince Frederick Charles responded by moving all his troops to the eastward. For the present von Moltke, who had established his quarters in the unfortunate Clam Gallas' castle at Reichenberg, was satisfied. His armies could not be brought closer together without losing their power of manœuvre, and it was decided that the 2nd July should, so far as was possible, be a day of rest; the only movements which took place were in the Army of the Elbe, which moved a little to the southward with a view to gaining its proper manœuvre interval. The respite thus afforded enabled the Austrians to take up their positions at their leisure and to restore some order in the ranks; and on the night of the 2nd July the armies went into bivouac with their outposts within four and a half miles of each other, yet neither army had the slightest idea of the whereabouts of the other.

Von Moltke's appreciation of the situation.—Fortunately von Moltke's correspondence and the Prussian official history of the war enable us to follow not only the movements of the troops, but also much of what passed through

the mind of the Chief of King William's Staff during this critical period of the war. At the moment when the invading armies had come into contact the enemy had disappeared, and an entirely new set of factors had been introduced into the problem. Von Moltke wisely, and according to his invariable rule, gave his opponent credit for doing the right thing. Putting himself in von Benedek's place, he argued that after suffering a series of reverses a skilful commander would withdraw to a strong defensive position, where he could gain time to reorganize his forces and to obtain reinforcements. Such a position was to be found on the left bank of the Elbe, between Josefstadt and Königgrätz. There, in addition to the protection afforded by the fortresses on the flanks, the front of the defending army would be covered by the Elbe, and the right flank, which was the more dangerous one, would be protected by the Aupa and the Mettau. At the same time, although the strength of the position was essentially defensive, the Austrians would be so placed that they could threaten the Crown Prince's communications with Silesia. That, in von Moltke's opinion, was the line which his opponent should have adopted, and that was the position which he prepared to face. Nevertheless he realized that it was not the only course open, and all his plans were laid with a view to meeting the unforeseen.

Von Moltke's theory of war.—Properly to understand von Moltke's strategy at this point, it is necessary to study his famous *Memorandum for the Guidance of Superior Officers*. This paper, it is true, was not issued until the year 1868, but there can be no doubt that the ideas which he then expressed were exactly those which were working in his brain throughout the 1866 campaign. All his life he had been revolving in his mind the various ways in which the advance of science could be turned to advantage in the

handling of an army, and his meditations had brought him to believe that many things which had at one time been thought unjustifiably dangerous might now be attempted with impunity. "War," he said, "is an art served by many sciences." It was in his adaptation of modern science to an ancient art that von Moltke showed his peculiar genius. In the 1868 memorandum von Moltke explains that if great results are to be achieved, it is imperative, in some way or another, to strike the enemy in flank, and then goes on to discuss the various ways in which this end may be obtained. First, he points out that to turn the flank of an army of 100,000 men from a point directly in its front must entail at least one day's march; a loss of twenty-four hours, which would be a clear gain to the enemy. He then discusses the desirability and difficulty of holding an enemy in front with part of the attacking army and enveloping his flank with another portion. Finally, he sums up all his strategical theories with the momentous words: "Incomparably more favourably will things shape themselves on the day of battle if all the forces can be concentrated from different points towards the field of battle itself; in other words, if the operations have been conducted in such a manner that a final short march from different points leads all available forces simultaneously upon the front and flanks of the adversary. In that case strategy has done the best it can ever hope to attain, and great results must be the consequence." Von Moltke, like Napoleon, aimed at striking his enemy in front and flank simultaneously; but the means which he adopted were exactly those which his great predecessor had declared to be fundamentally wrong. Let us now see how he proposed to put his theories into practice.

At any moment after the affair at Gitschin the Prussian armies were free to effect their junction. It was considered

preferable to keep them separate. "This arrangement," says the official historian, otherwise von Moltke himself, "strategically safe, was tactically very advantageous. If the armies were united in one mass, and the enemy was then met with in a position whence he could not be dislodged by a frontal attack, it would be necessary again to divide in order to make a flank attack. On the other hand, in keeping the two armies a short march apart, no risk was run if the enemy should attack either, for then the other would take him in flank." In view of the discussion with regard to the so-called French and German theories of war which has attracted so much attention lately, it is interesting to note that General Bonnal, who finds much to criticize in von Moltke's generalship, has nothing but praise for this decision to preserve an interval of strategic manœuvre between the Prussian armies. In his opinion those armies had effected their union, *as Napoleon understood the term*, by the evening of the 30th June, and any closer junction must have impaired their power of manœuvre. Here, then, we have a remarkable consensus of opinion; but at the time von Moltke's system was not understood even by the army commanders.

Von Moltke's plans.—Basing his calculations upon the supposition that the Austrians had probably taken up a position upon the left bank of the Elbe, between Königgrätz and Josefstadt, von Moltke prepared either to attack them in it or to manœuvre them out of it. His desire was to attack; but should the topographical difficulties, principally the rivers Mettau and Aupa, prove to be too great, he meant to have recourse to manœuvre. In the former case, the 2nd Army, while covering its own communications with Silesia, was to fall upon the enemy's right, and the 1st Army was to assail him in front; in the latter case, the entire force was to continue its march in the

direction of Pardubitz and to menace the Austrian communications with the south. Both these plans are adversely commented upon by Bonnal: the first on the ground that the flank attack was not sufficiently strong, and should have been strengthened by the transfer of at least one corps from the 1st to the 2nd Army; the second on the ground that the march across the enemy's front was highly dangerous, and that the steps taken to pin him to his ground during the operation were quite inadequate.¹ Both criticisms are intrinsically sound, but it is only fair to von Moltke to remember that he at no time gave more than the most general indication of his intentions. His plan of attack was not worked out in detail—or at least it has not come to light—and before such orders as were actually issued were carried into effect much of the doubt as to the enemy's position and intentions was set at rest.

Touch with the Austrian army regained.—In the course of the day it was reported to Prince Frederick Charles that a strong body of the enemy had assembled about Lipa, and to verify this report reconnaissances were pushed out towards Königgrätz. Between 6 and 7 p.m. the officers in charge returned with information which showed that the ground between the Bistritz and the Elbe was held in force. The 3rd Corps was discovered to be at Sadowa, and prisoners reported that the 1st and 10th Corps as well as the Saxons were all in front of the Elbe; ten regiments of cavalry and a numerous artillery were found to be at Lipa. The Prussians were, therefore, suddenly confronted by a situation entirely different from that which von Moltke had imagined. So far from having retired behind

¹ Von Moltke's instructions, which were issued about midday on the 2nd July, are given in the Prussian official history, p. 162 of the English translation. General Bonnal's comments, *Sadowa*, p. 109 *et seq.* (also the English translation), should be carefully studied.

the Elbe, a strong force of Austrians was discovered to be in front of it, and very close to the Prussian outposts. Von Benedek's intentions were still far from clear, and the discovery was interpreted as a sign that he was about to fall upon the Prussian 1st Army.

Prince Frederick Charles' plan of battle.—The battle of Königgrätz may be said to have begun the moment that Prince Frederick Charles heard that the enemy was within a few miles of him. His instructions from the royal headquarters were to attack, if possible with superior numbers, should the Austrians be found anywhere in front of the Elbe. Those instructions were entirely congenial to him, and he immediately prepared to forestall von Benedek in the supposed assumption of the initiative. For the time being all interest centres in Prince Frederick Charles' camp, and his handling of the problem is not only important in itself, but shows, more clearly than abstract discussion could ever do, the difference between his and von Moltke's conception of the coming battle. These are his orders:—

- “ (1) At daybreak to-morrow the 1st Army will be formed on the Horitz-Königgrätz road, ready for action against the position on the Bistritz at Sadowa.
- “ (2) General Horn's division (8th) will be in position at Milowitz by 2 a.m.
- “ (3) General Fransecky's division (7th) will march by Gross-Jeritz to Cerekwitz, and will take post at the castle there by 2 a.m.
- “ (4) The divisions of Generals Manstein (6th) and von Tümpling (5th) will start at 1.30 a.m., under command of General von Manstein, and will be posted as reserves south of Horitz; the 6th Division to the east, the 5th to the west of the Horitz-Königgrätz road. These divisions to be in their positions by 3 a.m.

- “(5) The 2nd Corps will move one division (3rd) to Pspanek, the other (4th) to Bristau. Both divisions to be in position by 2 a.m.
- “(6) The Cavalry Corps will saddle at dawn and await further orders in its bivouacs.
- “(7) The Reserve Artillery will advance to Horitz; the reserve artillery of the 3rd Corps will take post astride of the Horitz–Miletin road, and the reserve artillery of the 4th Corps astride of the Horitz–Gitschin road.
- “(8) General Herwath will march with all his available troops to Nechanitz, where he will arrive as early as possible.
- “(9) H.R.H. the Crown Prince has been requested to take post with one or two corps in front of Josefstadt, and to march with another corps to Gross-Bürglitz.
- “(10) As soon as possible the columns will open communication with one another, as well as with General Herwath on the right and the 2nd Army on the left.
- “(11) I will be at Milowitz at dawn.”

From these orders it is clear that Prince Frederick Charles intended to deliver a frontal attack with the 1st Army (six divisions), while the Army of the Elbe was to fall upon the Austrian left flank. Let us now see how he proposed to make use of the 2nd Army.

So soon as the orders to the troops under his own command were issued, Prince Frederick Charles wrote to the Crown Prince explaining his view of the situation as disclosed by reconnaissance, and expressing his intention to drive the enemy back to the Elbe. He then added: “As, moreover, large bodies of the enemy coming from

Josefstadt have crossed to the right bank of the Elbe, I can only suppose that they intend to operate against my left flank if I push on towards Königgrätz. This action would compel me to divide my forces, and I should not then be able to attain complete success in my task—the destruction of enemy that is in my front.

“I therefore ask Your Royal Highness to cover my left flank by moving the Guard Corps, or even a stronger force, on the right bank of the Elbe, by Köninghof or Josefstadt. I urge this course the more strongly as I cannot expect that Bonin’s corps will arrive in time, on account of the distance, and because I do not contemplate your encountering any strong force in the reconnaissance which has been ordered. I may add that my left wing will be at Gross-Jeritz and Cerekwitz.”

Here we have a conception of the coming battle which differed altogether from von Moltke’s. The famous *Memorandum* had not then been penned, and the Commander of the 2nd Army does not contemplate for a moment that final short march from different points which is to lead “all available forces simultaneously upon the front and flanks of the enemy.” Instead, he assigns to the Crown Prince a purely passive rôle, reserving for himself the danger and the glory of the attack. Without going into the question of whether Prince Frederick Charles was, or was not, justified in thus drawing up a plan of action to include the 2nd Army as well as his own, we may now turn to the royal head-quarters and see how the news brought in by the reconnoitring officers was received there.

Von Moltke’s fresh plan.—Immediately after the orders for the 3rd July had been issued, General von Voigts-Rhetz, Chief of the Staff of the 1st Army, left the head-quarters at Kamenitz for Gitschin, where he found the King and von Moltke, to whom he explained the situation as well as

the action which had been decided upon. One would have thought that news of such importance should have been passed on to the supreme authority hours before, but it was not until 11 p.m. that von Moltke, who had gone to bed, was aroused to hear that three Austrian corps had been located just beyond the Bistritz. A hurried conference followed. Von Moltke accepted the view that von Benedek had at last hardened his heart to attack, and therein he saw his opportunity. The situation of the Prussian armies was such that all three¹ could be directed upon the Austrian position, which had at last been discovered; and the King, acting no doubt upon the advice of the Chief of his Staff, determined to throw every man into the fight. If the whole of the Austrian army should be encountered so much the better; if not, then at least a portion of it would be destroyed, and the subsequent crossing of the Elbe would be by so much simplified. Exactly an hour after the arrival of von Voigts-Rhetz the decision was formed, and fresh orders were dispatched to the 2nd Army.

The difference between von Moltke's plan and that of Prince Frederick Charles.—Von Moltke knew by this time that Prince Frederick Charles had asked the Crown Prince to observe Josefstadt and to protect the left of the 1st Army. That was not his idea of battle. He knew, too, that Prince Frederick Charles was not sufficiently strong to attack the whole Austrian army should it prove to be concentrated and in position. If victory was to be won the 2nd Army must be employed offensively against the enemy's right. There was no time to lose, for the 1st Army was to be in position to attack by 3 a.m., and any delay might mean that it would be crushed before the 2nd Army could come to its assistance. Small wonder,

¹ Counting the Army of the Elbe as a separate unit, as it practically was, although directly under Prince Frederick Charles,

then, that the orders to the Crown Prince betray some anxiety. They begin, in the approved fashion, with a general statement of the situation so far as it was known at Gitschin and of Prince Frederick Charles' intentions. Then comes the significant sentence: "Your Royal Highness will be good enough to take the necessary steps *to march to the assistance of the 1st Army with all your forces*, moving against the right flank of the enemy, who will probably be discovered on the march, and immediately attack him."

For this rapid decision to change the rôle which had been assigned to the 2nd Army by Prince Frederick Charles, von Moltke has been universally, and rightly, praised. "The decision," says General Bonnal, "was simple enough, but it proved that its author possessed an exalted conception of the war of masses; and it was destined to save the 1st Army from a decisive defeat, and to change into a brilliant victory a situation which would have meant irremediable disaster if Moltke had agreed to Prince Frederick Charles' plan." These are weighty words; but it is a question whether von Moltke did not show his greatness almost as much in not interfering with the orders to the 1st Army and to the Army of the Elbe. He knew that for some hours these nine divisions might have to support the attack of the whole Austrian army. Had he known sooner, as he certainly should have known, of the information brought back by the reconnaissances, he would undoubtedly have arranged for a simultaneous converging movement of all his armies. That was his theory of battle-fighting. If only Prince Frederick Charles' orders could be countermanded in time this object might yet be achieved, and another man than von Moltke might well have made the attempt. The bare official account of the conference which broke up at midnight of July 2nd-3rd, after one hour's deliberation, pays no heed to the alternative

courses which may have been discussed. In a few bald words the whole credit is given to the King ; and it may be that the idea of holding back the 1st Army and the Army of the Elbe until the 2nd Army could be brought into the fight was not mooted. If so, all the more credit to those who were present ; but it is more probable that it was considered preferable to allow Prince Frederick Charles to bear for a time the whole weight of the impending battle, than to attempt to alter the orders and to stop troops some of whom would soon be on the march.

2nd Army head-quarters.—Meanwhile a curious state of affairs had prevailed at the head-quarters of the 2nd Army. Prince Frederick Charles' messenger reached Königinhof about 2 a.m., but the Crown Prince was then asleep, and it happened that von Blumenthal, the Chief of his Staff, had gone to Gitschin. In his absence the letter remained unopened until 3 a.m., when he returned from his midnight ride. He then took upon himself, without consulting his chief, to intimate to Prince Frederick Charles, not over-politely, that the 2nd Army would carry out the reconnaissances which had been ordered, and that no troops could be spared to guard the left of the 1st Army. From this letter it is evident that von Blumenthal must have left Gitschin before the arrival of von Voigts-Rhetz, and that he was still ignorant of the latest developments. About an hour later, however, von Moltke's messenger reached Königinhof, and at 5 a.m., that is, two hours after the 1st Army was to be in position, attack orders were issued to the 2nd Army. These orders begin with two significant paragraphs :—

- “(1) According to information received, it is expected that the enemy will to-day attack the 1st Army, which is at Horitz, Milowitz, and Cerekwitz.
- “(2) The 2nd Army is to go to the assistance of the 1st.”

Evidently the situation demanded prompt action, but even the 6th Corps, which was the nearest to the Austrian right, could hardly hope to make itself felt until midday, and the rest must be some time later. At the best, therefore, the 1st Army would be without support for seven hours, so that in some ways the situation of Prince Frederick Charles' army was not unlike Wellington's on the morning of the 18th June, 1815.

CHAPTER VIII

KÖNIGGRÄTZ ¹

MAP 3

THE Prussian task was in fact far simpler than von Moltke had ever dared to hope, for instead of attempting to fall upon the 1st Army, von Benedek's only idea was to await attack—to allow himself to be gripped in the vice which was closing in upon him. To add to the general difficulties, his orders were not issued until 11 p.m. on the 2nd, and did not reach some of the corps until between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m. on the 3rd; moreover, the new Chief of the Staff, von Baumgarten, did not join head-quarters nor have any opportunity of acquainting himself with von Benedek's plans and intentions until after the battle had actually begun. Somewhat abbreviated, the orders were:—

“KÖNIGGRÄTZ,

“*2nd July, 11 p.m.*

“From reports received, it appears that bodies of the enemy are near Neu Bydzow, Smidar, and Horitz. It appears probable that to-morrow an attack will be delivered upon the Saxon Corps, to meet which my orders are:—

“(1) The Saxon Corps will take post on the heights of Popowitz and Tresowitz, refusing the left wing, which will be covered by cavalry. A few advanced posts will be thrown out in front. The 1st Light

¹ The number present on the field of battle were: Prussians, 221,000; Austrians and Saxons, 215,000.

Cavalry Division will select a suitable position a little behind the left wing, between Problus and Prim.

- “(2) The 10th Corps will take post on the right of the Saxons. The 3rd Corps will be on the right of the 10th and will occupy the heights of Lipa and Chlum. The 8th Corps will support the Saxons and will place itself behind them.
- “(3) Should the enemy’s attack be directed only against our left, the troops not named above will merely hold themselves in readiness to move ; if, however, the attack should develop against our centre and right as well, the whole army will then take up the following positions :—
- “(4) The 4th Corps will deploy on the right of the 3rd, on the high ground between Chlum and Nedelist ; the 2nd Corps will take post on the right of the 4th and form the extreme right wing. The 2nd Light Cavalry Division will be in a position of readiness behind Nedelist. The 6th Corps will establish itself on the heights of Wsestar, and the 1st Corps on those of Rosnitz ; both corps will be concentrated. The 1st and 3rd Reserve Cavalry Divisions will be at Sweti ; the 2nd Reserve Cavalry Division at Briza.

“If, however, the attack should become general, the 1st and 6th Corps and the five cavalry divisions will form a central reserve at my own disposal. The whole army will be ready to fight to-morrow morning. The first troops to be attacked will inform those to right and left, which will pass on the information.

“The 8th Corps will leave its bivouac at once and will send an officer to the Saxon head-quarters.

In case of necessity this officer will lead the 8th Corps to the required position behind the Saxons, but if there is no attack the corps will camp at Charbusitz.

“(5) I will be on the left flank unless the battle becomes general, when I will go to Chlum.

“(6) In conclusion, if the army is compelled to retreat the various corps will march by Holitz¹ on Hohenmauth. The 2nd and 4th Corps will prepare bridges over the Elbe, the former between Lochowitz and Predmeritz, the latter near Placka. The engineers of the 1st Corps will immediately throw a bridge across the Adler at Swinar.”

The weakness of von Benedek's dispositions.—These orders, it will be observed, take no account of the great danger which was threatening the Austrian right flank, nor do they contemplate anything more than a perfectly passive resistance. Nothing could have been more favourable to von Moltke's plans. Prince Frederick Charles' impetuosity threatened to involve the Prussians in serious difficulties, many of which were smoothed away by von Benedek's lack of vigour. Moreover, the Austrian position, a rough semicircle with both flanks resting on the Elbe, was the worst possible in which to meet an enveloping attack. The main line of retreat, the high road which runs from Sadowa to Königgrätz, was easily accessible to the enemy should the defence be broken at any single point. Finally, by placing his cavalry inside his defensive ring, von Benedek deprived that arm of its mobility and himself of its services. Not even in his most sanguine moments could von Moltke have anticipated such complete acquiescence in his plans for directing all his forces simultaneously against the front and flanks of his foe.

¹ i.e. south-eastward from Königgrätz.

The field of battle.—Before describing the decisive battle of the campaign—the greatest between Leipzig and Mukden—it will be as well to attempt to give some idea of the tactical features of the ground upon which the question of the leadership of the German-speaking peoples was finally decided. Von Benedek's orders are full of such expressions as "the heights of Wsestar," and it is first necessary to give some warning as to the interpretation of these terms. Let the reader imagine that he is standing about a quarter of a mile north-west of the village of Chlum.¹ Should he visit the ground he will there find an iron erection, perhaps one hundred feet high, from the top of which he can obtain a bird's-eye view of the grandest of European battle-fields. From that point of vantage he will find that he is standing as it were upon the outer rim of a plate or dish, from which the ground slopes gently in successive folds towards the centre of the semicircle at Königgrätz. A little more than two miles to his left, as he looks north-westward towards Sadowa—a tiny village almost indistinguishable were it not for a few Prussian graves—the church spire of Probus stands out prominently on the further side of a wide but shallow depression through which runs the road from Horitz to Königgrätz, von Benedek's main line of retreat. Southward from Probus the rim of the dish is formed by a line of wooded heights, which were held by the Saxons, through Ober Prim to Techlowitz. Due north of the chosen point of observation and across another open depression is the Swiep Wald,² in which the bloodiest of

¹ This is historic ground, for it was at Chlum that Frederick the Great fixed his camp when the Austrians had retired to Königgrätz after the battle of Hohenfriedberg, June to August, 1745.

² Called in General Bonnal's *Sadowa* (English translation) the Maslowed Wood. It seems better to adhere to the name by which this wood is universally known to the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages and which is used in the official accounts.

the fighting took place, and a little to the east is the village of Maslowed. From Maslowed one spur is thrust forth north-eastward towards Racitz, forming on its way the Horenowes Height, upon which still stand two conspicuous trees, a convenient point of direction for the advancing Prussians; a second spur leaves the village in a south-easterly direction and drops gradually towards the Elbe until it disappears in open plain country to the east of Nedelist. Behind this second spur yet another, but slightly lower ridge runs from Chlum towards Nedelist and the Elbe, and it was here that von Benedek's right wing was posted on the morning of the 3rd July. From Königgrätz to Chlum the rise in the ground is considerable, but very gradual; so gradual that from the summit of the look-out post the country to south and south-east has the appearance of an unbroken, highly cultivated plain. In fact, however, there are many folds amply sufficient to conceal the movement of troops, but each successive rise becomes of less and less importance as the Elbe is neared. Beyond the outer rim of the plate or dish the exact reverse is the case. The ridge which runs south-eastward from Chlum is commanded by the Maslowed-Nedelist spur, which, in turn, is dominated by the Horenowes Height, and in every case the outer slopes are steeper and bolder than the inner. Tactically the most difficult feature in von Benedek's problem was the proper way of dealing with these successive ridges. His policy in standing to fight in front of the Elbe has been universally condemned, but it must be admitted that his position was naturally strong, had it been turned to full advantage. His field of fire was everywhere good, and behind his main line of defence his reserve troops could move with perfect freedom and in perfect concealment from side to side of the battlefield. His flanks were protected by the Trotina and the Bistritz, and although

a stretch of open country between these rivers offered an easy line of approach to the enemy, it was completely commanded by the Horenowes Height. In their upper waters these two streams are quite insignificant, but as they near the Elbe they become serious military obstacles under any conditions, and at the time of the battle both were greatly swollen by recent rains. The enemy's power of manœuvre was, therefore, very much restricted, and in such a position the Duke of Wellington would have been at his best; but the chosen battlefield was entirely unfitted for that passive defence which was von Benedek's conception of battle.

Having neglected in his orders to take into consideration the Crown Prince's army, the Trotina was left unguarded, and the Prussians were permitted to make use of the Horenowes Height to conceal their intended attack upon the Austrian right. Thus it came about that Prince Frederick Charles' temerity went unpunished, and the Prussians were permitted to develop the battle on the lines which they had themselves selected.

The beginning of the battle.—At 1.30 a.m. on the 3rd July Prince Frederick Charles left his head-quarters at Kamenitz and took post with his staff under a fruit tree in front of Milowitz. Rain and mist delayed the march of his various columns, whose concentration behind the Hill of Dub was not completed until between 5 a.m. and 6 a.m. About 5.30 a.m. word was received from General Herwath that thirty-six battalions of the Army of the Elbe would reach Nechanitz between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. Everything, therefore, seemed to show that unless the Austrians should suddenly retire behind the Elbe the co-operation of the Prussian forces was ensured. In these circumstances the duty of the 1st Army appeared to be to pin the enemy to his ground, "in order that the double flank attack which had

been concerted might come into full play.”¹ Since, however, the assistance of the 2nd Army could not be reckoned on until about midday, it was not advisable to make a genuine attack. The two principal conditions of the problem were therefore contradictory, and in the circumstances Prince Frederick Charles decided to drive in the Austrian outposts and to establish himself firmly on the right bank of the Bistritz. With this object the 8th Division was ordered to advance, north of the high road, towards Sadowa. The 3rd and 4th Divisions were to keep abreast of the 8th, but to the south of the high road. The 5th and 6th Divisions were to follow the 8th. The cavalry corps was to cover the right wing and to keep in touch with the Army of the Elbe; while a brigade, formed apparently from the divisional cavalry, was to maintain communication with Fransecky’s division at Cerekwitz. The orders to the last-named officer were “to advance from Cerekwitz so soon as the action commenced at Sadowa, and to join in it as circumstances might demand.” A great deal of latitude was thus allowed to the commander of the 7th Division, and incidentally a great deal of responsibility was thrown upon him; it is difficult to see that it could have been otherwise, but his action had a far-reaching and unexpected effect upon the whole course of the battle.

Soon after 6 a.m. the Prussian 8th, 4th, and 3rd Divisions, supported by their artillery, deployed on the rising ground on the right of the Bistritz from Sadowa, through Mzan, to Zawadilka. Three batteries established themselves on the Roskos Berg and, as the mist began to clear, engaged some Austrian guns which were posted between Maslowed and Lipa. The first shots appear to have been exchanged about 7.30 a.m., and almost at the same moment the advanced guard of the Prussian 8th Division engaged the Austrian

¹ Prussian official account (English translation), p. 174.

outposts¹ in the Sadowa brickfields. At first it was Prince Frederick Charles' intention merely to engage the enemy on the line of the Bistritz, and a steady artillery duel was kept up, in which the Austrians had rather the advantage; but the sound of the firing near Sadowa was taken by Fransecky as the signal for him to advance, and he immediately launched his division to the attack of the village of Benatek. Here, too, the outposts were driven in without much difficulty, and two battalions of the advanced guard were sufficient to capture the village. Two more battalions came up, and then the brigade, supported by four batteries, advanced against the Swiep Wald, with the laudable intention of assisting the 8th Division at Sadowa.

Disposition of the Austrian army. The left.—It is now time to turn to the Austrians and see how the Prussian attack had affected their dispositions. Beginning from the left, it was already past midnight when the Saxon Corps received its orders to take post on the heights of Popowitz and Tresowitz. The ground does not appear to have been reconnoitred, for at the last moment it was found to be unsuitable for the whole corps, and permission was obtained from the Commander-in-Chief to make the main line between Nieder Prim and Problus. One brigade was pushed forward to the line Lubno-Popowitz-Tresowitz, while the remainder of the corps established itself on the heights in rear. The cavalry division watched the bridge at Nechanitz. The 8th Corps, which had been ordered to support the Saxons, left its bivouacs near Nedelist at 3 a.m. and marched across the battlefield towards Charbusitz. Its progress must have been slow, as its leading brigade reached a point a little to the east of Problus shortly before 9 a.m., by which hour the advanced guard of the

¹ Brigade Prochaska, 3rd Corps.

Elbe Army had succeeded in crossing the Bistritz at Nechanitz, after a skirmish with a Saxon battalion, and was moving towards Lubno.

The Austrian centre.—Von Benedek's order for the occupation of the Lipa-Chlum line did not reach the headquarters of the 3rd Corps until nearly 6 a.m.; before it could be communicated to the various units Colonel Prochaska's brigade was actually engaged with the Prussians in Sadowa, and the remaining brigades were on their way to their alarm posts, which were well in advance of the new defensive line. In these circumstances all that the corps commander could do was to tell Colonel Prochaska to act as a rearguard, and to hold the enemy in check until the main body of the corps had been posted in its fresh position. Most of the troops were halted and recalled without difficulty, but on the right General Appiano's brigade had passed Cistowes and was hotly engaged with Fransecky's advanced guard in the Swiep Wald. The 10th Corps had less difficulty to contend with. It, too, received its orders at 6 a.m., but as the Prussian attack did not develop so rapidly south of Sadowa, it was not hampered in carrying them out. One brigade watched the line of the Bistritz from Dohalitz to Mokrowous, while the main body, including the artillery, was on the higher ground (the rim of the dish) south and west of Lipa, where it formed the connecting link between the Saxons and the 3rd Corps.

The Austrian right.—The right wing of the Austrian army was formed by the 4th and 2nd Corps and, in accordance with von Benedek's order, should have taken post on the line Chlum-Nedelist-River Elbe. Count Festetics, who commanded the 4th Corps, received his instructions between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m., and about 8 a.m. he left his bivouac at Nedelist to carry them out. At that

hour his outpost brigade had been driven out of the village of Benatek by Fransecky, and part of it was fighting alongside the Appiano brigade in the Swiep Wald. Hearing the sound of the guns away to the north, Festetics pushed on beyond his allotted position to the higher ground between Cistowes and Maslowed. There, attracted by the fighting in the Swiep Wald, his troops gradually brought up their right until they were facing almost due west, instead of to the north as had been intended. This forward movement of the 4th Corps quickly drew with it the 2nd Corps. One brigade only (Henriquez) stayed to watch the right flank, while the remainder of the corps and the artillery moved towards the Horenowes Height, where it fulfilled its order to connect with the right of the 4th Corps; but it, too, soon became involved in the vortex of the Swiep Wald, to the neglect of its duties on the eastern flank. Thus Prince Frederick Charles' order to the 7th Division "to advance from Cerekwitz so soon as the action commenced at Sadowa," had resulted in that division thrusting itself into an isolated position on the left bank of the Bistritz and drawing upon itself the greater part of two Austrian corps. This was the dominating feature of the earlier hours of the battle.

The second phase of the battle.—About 8 a.m. a burst of cheering announced the arrival of the King of Prussia on the battlefield, and a few moments later he made his way to the Hill of Dub. There he received from Prince Frederick Charles a full account of the situation, and at once gave orders for the whole of the 1st Army to advance and occupy the line of the Bistritz. This might be done either by holding the right bank, which formed a good defensive position, or by forcing the passages and seizing the villages on the left bank. The official appreciation of the situation runs as follows: "The plan of the battle

required the utmost resistance on the part of the centre of the Prussian forces (i.e. the First Army) to hold the ground which it had gained up to the present moment ; but a further advance, which could only be effected with considerable loss, and might perhaps dislodge the enemy before the flank attacks of the other armies could take effect, was by no means necessary. It was, however, indispensable to keep the Austrian army occupied on all points of its front so long as the 2nd Army was on the march. For this purpose the Bistritz must be crossed, and as the advanced guard of the 7th Division (Fransecky) had already won a firm footing on the other bank, the advance gradually commenced from the left wing. The movement was successively followed by the 8th, 4th and 3rd Divisions. The 5th and 6th Divisions and the Cavalry Corps were in the meantime held in continual readiness." Such is the official justification for the offensive movement by the 1st Army which began about 9 a.m. General Bonnal, however, prefers to believe that the real reason for crossing the Bistritz at such an early stage in the battle was to extricate the 7th Division from its dangerous situation and to save it from annihilation. Whatever the truth may be, there can be little doubt that, but for the King's decision to deliver a general attack, Fransecky must have met with a crushing disaster in the Swiep Wald.

The fighting in the Swiep Wald.—We left General Fransecky's division at the moment when his four leading battalions, after passing through Benatek, were advancing towards the Swiep Wald. It so happened that General Appiano chose this very moment to order his two battalions to withdraw to their appointed post near Chlum. They had been engaged for some little time with Prussian skirmishers, but as the attack seemed to hang fire General

Appiano thought that the moment had arrived for him to carry out the instructions which he had received. The sound of fighting near Maslowed soon convinced him that he had erred and the two battalions were again sent forward, but their temporary withdrawal had been sufficient to enable the Prussian advanced guard to establish itself strongly in the interior of the wood, and two battalions had forced their way to the outskirts of Cistowes. Nevertheless Fransecky's position soon became extremely critical. The Austrian 4th Corps, followed by the 2nd, was rapidly coming to the assistance of the outpost brigade. The first troops to arrive were six battalions under General Fleischhacker, which advanced from the direction of Maslowed, and struck the left flank and rear of the Prussians. Cistowes was retaken, but the crest of the hill on either side of which the wood is planted afforded a strong line where, shielded to some extent from artillery, the breech-loading rifle gave the Prussians an enormous advantage over the Austrian muzzle-loaders. Two more Prussian battalions came to the assistance of the four which were clinging to the wood ; but for every Prussian soldier four Austrians were thrown into the fight, and by 9.30 a.m. six battalions were opposed by twenty-eight. From east to west the wood is nearly a mile in length, and in depth it is about 1100 yards ; moreover, it is broken with steep gullies and rough with undergrowth. In such ground there can be little control, and battalions and companies are guided only by their own instinct. The higher commanders were, too, peculiarly unfortunate. Count Festetics had his left foot shattered by a shell, and was compelled to hand over the command of the 4th Corps to General Mollinary ; Count Thun, commander of the 2nd Corps, suffered a severe blow on the head ; and both Fransecky and his aide-de-camp had their horses killed

under them. In the circumstances it was natural that the Austrian counter-attacks lacked cohesion and direction, and failed in consequence to derive full advantage from their superior numbers. Gradually more and more men were absorbed into the wood. Fransecky's main body supported the advanced guard, making twelve battalions in all, and these were reinforced by two battalions of the 8th Division ; but with the arrival of the 2nd Corps the Austrians came on in far greater numbers, and by 11 a.m. forty battalions and one hundred and twenty-eight guns were attacking fourteen battalions and twenty-five guns. Nothing but the shelter of the wood, the breech-loading rifle, and their own individual bravery saved the Prussians from destruction. It was a great day for the 7th Division.

The passage of the Bistritz by the 8th, 4th, and 3rd Prussian divisions.—There we must leave Fransecky and his men, fighting for their lives, and follow the passage of the Bistritz by the other Prussian divisions. Owing to von Benedek's decision to make his main resistance on the ridge between Lipa and Probus, this operation proved easier than was expected, for the Austrian artillery was too far off to make itself felt until the Prussians were well over the stream. About 9 a.m. the 8th Division, leaving its advanced guard engaged with Colonel Prochaska at Sadowa, moved north-eastward to Sowetitz, crossed the stream unopposed, and then turned southward towards the Königgrätz road. Finding himself threatened in flank, Colonel Prochaska fell back towards Lipa, and the road was then open for the passage of the Prussian infantry and artillery over the Sadowa bridge. As it marched down the left bank of the Bistritz from Sowetitz the 8th Division came under fire of some Austrian batteries on the high ground, but as it had been particularly warned that the attack was not to be pressed too far, it contented itself

with taking shelter in the Hôla wood, where it was soon joined by its old advanced guard. A few weak parties of Austrians fell back hurriedly, but on reaching the further edge of the wood the Prussians found themselves exposed to the fire of a formidable line of artillery which stretched between Lipa and Stretitz.

Meanwhile the experience of the 3rd and 4th Divisions had been very similar to that of the 8th Division. The 4th Division, covered by two advanced-guard battalions, crossed the bridge at Sadowa and marched against Dohalitz and Dohalicka. The advanced troops of the Austrian 10th Corps, finding their right exposed by Colonel Prochaska's retreat, retired quietly to the main position and permitted the Prussian skirmishers to enter the villages with very little opposition. The main body of the 4th Division stayed under cover behind the Hôla wood. In much the same way the 3rd Division crossed the Bistriz rather lower down, but being without the shelter of the wood, was more exposed to the fire of the Austrian batteries and was compelled to move in several lines of deployed battalions. Once across the stream, it assembled in three masses behind the villages of Dohalitz, Dohalicka, and Mokrowous. Both divisions left their artillery for the present on the right bank, so that the infantry was without support, and in this portion of the field the battle was controlled by the Austrian guns.

The Army of the Elbe.—So far the Prussian centre had received no help from the flanking armies. The Crown Prince was still far from the battlefield, and the Army of the Elbe had as yet hardly made itself felt against the Austrian left. Here, as in the centre, the Prussian advance was facilitated by von Benedek's dispositions for a purely defensive battle. The bridges over the lower Bistriz were very weakly guarded, and General

Herwath's advanced guard had no difficulty in establishing itself on the eastern bank covering Lubno, Nechanitz, and Kuncitz. Ample ground was thus secured for the deployment of the main body. The 15th Division, which led the march, reached Nechanitz about 10.30 a.m. and began at once to defile across the bridge, and was directed by way of the castle of Hradek, which was held by two battalions of the advanced guard, against the left of the Saxons at Neu Prim and Ober Prim. Seeing that support was at hand, the commander of the advanced guard renewed the action with great vigour all along the front, from Popowitz to Neu Prim. A detailed and admirable account of General von Schöler's conduct of this difficult operation is given by General Bonnal,¹ and it will be sufficient to note here that by 2 p.m. the 14th and 15th Divisions were safely across the stream. Thence they advanced on Nieder Prim and Problus, whence the Saxons were dislodged about 3.30 p.m.; but by that hour a Prussian victory was assured, and the only question was to what extent the Army of the Elbe would be able to participate in it, or for how long the Saxons would be able to protect the retreat.

The 1st Army from 11 a.m.—Meanwhile the position of the 1st Army became momentarily more desperate. The attempt to relieve the pressure upon the 7th Division, or to hold the Austrians to their ground, whichever it may have been, had resulted merely in exposing the 8th, 4th and 3rd Divisions to a terrific artillery fire to which they were quite unable to reply. By 11 a.m. only seven

¹ "The work of the advanced guard . . . deserves every praise, and is in the highest degree creditable to the tactical instinct of Generals von Herwath and Schöler. It is thus that we conceive the tactical rôle of advanced guards; and we only hope that at manœuvres, and afterwards in war, our advanced guards will always be engaged as wisely, as boldly, and as opportunely."—General Bonnal, *Sadowa*, p. 191.

Prussian batteries (42 guns) were on the left bank of the Bistritz, and these were far too few to engage the long line of hostile guns, estimated by the Prussians at two hundred, which stretched from Lipa to Tresowitz. Eighty guns still remained beyond the stream, but for them no suitable positions could be found and, unsupported by either of the other arms, the Prussian infantry suffered dreadful losses. In such a situation the instinct of good infantry is always to advance to the attack, but every attempt to leave such cover as had been found resulted in failure, and the higher commanders realized that the issue must depend upon the loyal co-operation of the flanking armies. The two reserve divisions were, it is true, brought across the Bistritz about midday with a view to offensive action, but except that three more batteries took up the unequal duel there was no change for the better; indeed, it became rather worse, for two of the 8th Division batteries exhausted their ammunition and retired.

The situation of the 7th Division in the Swiep Wald was even more critical. The centre had been broken by repeated attacks, and from 11 o'clock onwards the two wings fought independently at the south-western and south-eastern extremities of the wood. Gradually even these bodies became disintegrated, until five distinct and desperate actions were taking place between Benatek and Cistowes. Just as affairs were at their blackest, and began to look as though the utmost limit of human endurance had been reached, it was noticed in the Prussian lines that the pressure began to slacken. The report that the Crown Prince had arrived flew from mouth to mouth, and fresh heart was put into the defence. The crisis was indeed at an end, but another anxious hour was to pass before hope became accomplished fact.

CHAPTER IX

KÖNIGGRÄTZ—THE PRUSSIAN 2ND ARMY

MAP 3

The Austrian 2nd and 4th Corps recalled.—We left the 2nd Army at the moment when the Crown Prince's orders were issued directing his troops against the Austrian right. Had von Benedek's instructions been literally obeyed the Crown Prince would have found his march opposed by the 2nd and 4th Austrian Corps ; but, as we have seen, the Swiep Wald had proved to be an irresistible attraction, and only a single brigade at Sendrasitz remained to face the danger from north and east. The bold action of the Prussian 7th Division, dangerous as it was, had, in fact, torn a great rent in the Austrian defence and laid open the road to Chlum, the key of the position. Neither Count Festetics nor Count Thun seem to have thought it worth while to communicate to the Commander-in-Chief their departure from the letter of his orders, and it was not until he reached Chlum that he realized what had happened. It should be remembered, too, that this was the moment at which for the first time the Chief of his Staff obtained a comprehensive grasp of the plan of battle. After a consultation with von Baumgarten, von Benedek ordered the 4th Corps to retire to the Chlum-Nedelist line. About 11 a.m., seeing that the right wing was becoming more and more heavily engaged, von Baumgarten, acting with the consent of his chief, sent an order for the 6th Corps to

take up the position which had been vacated by the 2nd and 4th. Unfortunately this order was countermanded verbally a little later by the Commander-in-Chief, who, however, omitted to inform the Chief of his Staff of the change. About half an hour afterwards a telegram from Josefstadt informed von Benedek that strong bodies of the enemy appeared to be marching against his right flank, and thereupon the order to the 2nd and 4th Corps was reiterated. The withdrawal was to be covered by the 2nd Division of Light Cavalry. On receiving this second order Mollinary, who knew nothing of its reason and saw the possibility of winning an important success in his immediate front, repaired to head-quarters and there expounded his own view of the situation. Von Benedek adhered to his decision and the retreat began; but it was now past midday, and the withdrawal across the front of the rapidly approaching 2nd Army was full of danger, especially for the 2nd Corps, which had the greater distance to cover.¹

The march of the Prussian 2nd Army.—We must now return to the Prussian 2nd Army and follow the march of its divisions to the field of battle. No line of telegraph connected the Crown Prince with the different corps, and the transmission of the order which was issued at 5 a.m. was extraordinarily slow. The 1st Corps had been informed directly from the royal head-quarters of the plan for the day, and it had been assumed that it would act immediately in accordance with the spirit of von Moltke's training. Von Bonin, however, thought it right to await more definite instructions from his corps commander, and as these did not reach him until 8 a.m.

¹ In the account of this incident Crousse's translation of the Austrian account has been closely adhered to. Bonnal's version differs somewhat in detail.

(or 7.15 a.m. according to the officer who carried them), the 1st Corps, whose assistance had been expected at an early hour, made no move until 9 a.m.

The Guard Corps had bivouacked by divisions ; the 1st, which was with the army head-quarters at Königinhof, had thrown out an advanced brigade about three miles to the westward ; the 2nd was at Rettendorf. The latter was ordered to march at 7 a.m. for Königinhof, the former left at 8 a.m. for Jericek. The 5th Corps, which was some way in rear, at Gradlitz, also marched at 8 a.m. The 6th Corps presented a greater difficulty, for it had been detailed to make a reconnaissance towards Josefstadt. The 12th Division crossed the Elbe on a pontoon bridge during the early hours of the morning, and the skirmishers had actually come under the fire of the fortress when the order was received to wheel westward towards Welchow. The 11th Division was caught before leaving its bivouac, and was directed to march straight to Welchow instead of following the 12th Division, as previously arranged. Thus at 8 a.m. the only troops of the 2nd Army which were on the right bank of the Elbe were the 1st Corps, far away at Praussnitz, the advanced guard of the 1st Guard Division, and the 12th Division. Of these the last-named, which, by the way, had been reduced by detachments to seven battalions only, was marching away from the battlefield towards Josefstadt. Evidently, therefore, the hard-pressed 1st Army could expect no help from this quarter before midday.

Fortunately for the Prussians, they possessed in von Alvensleben, who commanded the advanced brigade, the 2nd, of the Guard Division, a leader of rare determination. From his bivouac at Daubrawitz he heard the fierce cannonade on the banks of the Bistritz and, without waiting for orders, set his troops in motion for Jericek. At the

same time he dispatched a mounted officer to tell Fransecky that he would be at that village by 11.30 a.m. So well did the men march that they reached their point half an hour in advance of their time, with the 1st Brigade close behind them ; but the main body of the 2nd Guard Division did not cross the bridge at Königshof until after 11 a.m. The 1st and 5th Corps were still in rear, but the 6th Corps was hurrying towards the sound of the guns as quickly as the state of the roads would admit. Marching in two columns, the 11th Division with its four batteries reached Litic about 10 a.m., and there deployed in two lines. The march was then continued straight across country as far as the junction of the Trotina and the Trotinka. At that point there was a bridge, but there was no time to spare, and part of the leading line waded through the stream with the water nearly up to their armpits. Others, where the depth was greater, got across with the help of strong beams, while the second line made use of the bridge. In this way the 11th Division reached the high ground north of Racitz, where it came under the fire of the Austrian guns, almost at the same time as von Alvensleben's brigade arrived at Jericek. The 12th Division was then near the Horicka Berg, east of the Trotina. The march over the sandy soil, made sodden by the recent rains, and through the marshy ground on the bank of the Trotina, had been exhausting in the extreme, especially for the artillery horses, many of whom dropped dead in the traces ; but beyond a few weak patrols no opposition had been encountered. While von Benedek and his corps commanders were disputing as to whether the Chlum-Nedelist line was or was not to be occupied, the Prussians were rapidly nearing the key of the position ; and all the time two Austrian infantry corps and five cavalry divisions, each with two horse-artillery batteries,

stood idly by. When opportunities like this are allowed to slip, it is easy for the detractors of the cavalry arm to say that the day of mounted troops has passed away, and to ask, "What did the cavalry do in 1866?" Cavalry will do nothing if held permanently in check, but in this case its proper place was on the line of the Trotina, and the further bank at that, not within the semicircle formed by Austrian infantry and guns.

The 2nd Army in action.—Meanwhile the Crown Prince of Prussia had ridden forward close behind Alvensleben's brigade of Guards, and from a point of vantage could make out the two trees which still stand on the Horenowes Height. He could see, too, that a mass of artillery¹ was firing in the direction of Benatek, and that the 7th Division appeared to be in considerable difficulties. There was no time to lose. The infantry of the Guard and 6th Divisions was directed straight against the hill with the two trees, which appeared to mark the Austrian right flank, and all the artillery² was brought into action against the Austrian guns, which swung round and changed the direction of their fire from west to north. Thus the hard-pressed Prussian 7th Division in the Swiep Wald received its first measure of relief.

The Prussian infantry deployed to attack, and were opposed in Racitz and along the lower Trotina by weak parties of General Henriquez' brigade, while the Guards found the village of Horenowes lightly held by the enemy. But the Austrians had been struck full in flank, at the very moment when orders were being issued for their retreat. In quick succession the village and heights of Horenowes, Racitz, Trotina, and Sendrasitz fell into the hands of

¹ Five batteries were on the hill; a smaller line was lower down west of Horenowes on the Wrchowitz road.

² Forty-eight guns.

the triumphant Prussians. By 2 p.m. the last of the Austrians was driven out of Maslowed, and then the most commanding of the successive ridges was wholly in Prussian hands. Fortunately for the retreating Austrians the Maslowed-Nedelist-Lochenitz ridge afforded some shelter to their movements, and once more their splendid artillery came to the rescue of the infantry. The first guns to fall back had been those on the Wrchowitz road, and they were followed by the batteries on the Horenowes Heights. Together they took up a new position upon the inner Chlum-Nedelist ridge, a strong force of reserve artillery joined them, and more than a hundred guns were massed against Maslowed. As so often happened in this war, the battle became a duel between gun and rifle, and such a contest could have but one end.

The attack upon Chlum.—The Prussian strength increased as the battalions in rear hurried forward to join in the fight, and when Maslowed was taken General Hiller von Gärtringen, who commanded the Prussian 1st Guard Division, with sure tactical insight, hurled his men straight at Chlum. Even now von Benedek, who was near Lipa, had no idea of the danger which was threatening to overwhelm him. Covered by the fire of seventy guns, and taking every advantage of the numerous folds in the ground, the Prussians moved swiftly and secretly towards Chlum, where the church-steeple provided a convenient directing mark. Artillery played upon the Prussian lines, but the surprise of the Austrian infantry was complete. Two battalions garrisoned the village, but their attention was taken up with affairs in their front and no resistance was offered to the flank attack until the centre of the village was reached. In a few minutes fourteen guns were captured; a little later one battery, which will be for ever famous, fought until it lost its commander, one other officer,

fifty-two men, and sixty-eight horses; one gun only was saved. At first von Benedek refused to believe that this important post had fallen, but as he rode up to see for himself what had happened, a volley which laid low several of his staff convinced him that the report was true. A counter-attack by two battalions failed completely; a more important attempt by the 1st Reserve Cavalry Division to retake the village was repulsed by the terrible fire of the Prussian breech-loaders; and then three battalions of the Guards turned southward and occupied Rosberitz. The force of this great attack was at last spent. Nothing could have exceeded the energy or valour with which it was conducted, but the 1st Guard Division had outrun its supports, and for the present it could do no more. A wedge had been driven into the very centre of the defence, and incidentally the artillery of the 4th Corps, between Chlum and Nedelist, had been compelled to seek a more secure position.

So rapidly had events succeeded one another that General Fleischhacker, who, owing to a misunderstanding, was still in Cistowes with his brigade, had no idea that the roads to Maslowed and Nedelist were still closed. Seeing that it was time to retire, he first sent off his artillery with a cavalry escort towards the former village, and then started to make his way with his infantry to the latter. The guns had not gone far when they struck a body of the enemy and a confused fight ensued. The hussars, who were acting as escort, charged a Prussian battery and cut their way almost to Maslowed, where, as it happened, the Crown Prince of Prussia had taken his stand with his staff. He had time to get out of danger, and a squadron of Prussian cavalry coming up at the moment, most of the Austrians and all their guns were captured. Meanwhile the infantry of the brigade

had found Chlum in the hands of the enemy, and had been forced to retire in some disorder by Lipa and Langenhof towards Wsestar.

The Prussian 6th Corps.—While the 1st Guard Division had been winning this tremendous success in the centre, the 11th Division on the left had passed through Sendrasitz and, although suffering a good deal from artillery fire, had entered Nedelist and made a number of prisoners. Still further to the east the weak 12th Division, reduced by further detachments to five battalions only, had crossed the Trotina at the village of that name and moved by the main road towards Königgrätz. Its march was opposed by General Henriquez' brigade, and for the present it was not sufficiently strong to force its way into Lochenitz.

The general situation at 3 p.m.—Thus by 3 p.m. the crisis of the battle was over and a Prussian victory was assured. The 2nd Army was in possession of Chlum, Rosberitz and Nedelist, and was almost across the main Austrian line of retreat to Königgrätz. The Army of the Elbe was pressing hard against the Austrian left, and but for the long delay caused by crossing the single bridge at Nechanitz might even now have broken through the defence on that flank. In the centre, the 1st Army, which for something like seven hours had borne the heat of the fight, was preparing to take its revenge. To meet all these foes there remained an Austrian reserve of two corps, the 1st and 6th, two cavalry divisions, and a strong force of artillery; the 3rd and 10th Corps, with their artillery, were not yet beaten; and on the left the Army of the Elbe and the 8th Corps were holding out strongly in the wood of Bor.

Austrian counter-attack. Rosberitz retaken.—From 3 p.m. onwards the battle resolved itself into an attempt on the part of the Austrians to make good their retreat

with as little loss as possible. As early as 2 p.m. the commander of the 4th Corps, Mollinary, had appealed to von Ramming (6th Corps) for support, and the latter had in turn begged for instructions from his chief. But von Benedek, brave soldier though he undoubtedly was, seems to have lost control of the battle in the broader sense and to have been incapable of forming any comprehensive plan. In the absence of any orders von Ramming took it upon himself to act, and at 3 p.m. sent forward two of his brigades to retake Rosberitz and Chlum. The situation of the Prussian Guard Divisions in those villages was far from happy. More than a hundred guns were pouring a converging fire upon them from Wsestar and Langenhof, and Benedek's brigade of the 3rd Corps was striving to issue from the Lipa Wood. To these enemies the 6th Corps was now added, and the Prussians, overborne by numbers, were driven back, fighting fiercely, from Rosberitz upon Chlum, whither they were followed by Rozenweig's brigade. Three guns were captured, but this vigorous counter-stroke had the effect of attracting every available Prussian soldier to the aid of the 1st Guard Division. Four battalions of the 2nd Guard Division had at last arrived, and at the critical moment the advanced guard of the long-expected 1st Corps came into the fight. At the same time the 11th Division was pressing westward from Nedelist and, being without support, the Austrians in their turn were driven back.

Chlum was saved, but for some time longer the fight raged fiercely round Rosberitz. Once again that village was taken, but only to be recaptured by the Austrian 1st Corps when the 6th had been thoroughly beaten. Nothing, however, could stem the tide of victory. The Austrians were almost surrounded by the increasing numbers of the enemy, and after suffering immense losses the 1st Corps

was compelled to acknowledge defeat and to leave Rosberitz, like Chlum, to the foe. It was in the midst of this bitter fight that Hiller von Gärtringen, the commander of the Prussian 1st Guard Division, was killed by a shell. "It may be said of him that he fell in the midst of his triumph without having seen its full glory." Nevertheless his end was one which every soldier must envy.

The advance of the Prussian 1st Army.—Meanwhile the Austrian 3rd and 10th Corps were falling back, covered by their artillery. The flash of guns on the Horenowes Heights had carried to the royal head-quarters on the Roskos Berg the first news of the arrival of the Crown Prince's army and its intervention in the battle. Soon afterwards the infantry could be seen moving towards Chlum, and about 3 p.m. a perceptible weakening of the hostile fire indicated the change which had come over the fight. It was clear that the day was tending to go in Prussia's favour, and at 3.30 p.m. His Majesty the King gave the word for the whole line to advance. It was now that the Austrian artillery rendered its last supreme service to the rest of the army. From Langenhof the batteries of the 3rd and 10th Corps retired, some to Rosnitz and some to Wsestar. Under cover of their fire the infantry fell back, passing round the western flank of the troops which had been placed in reserve. So resolute was the front which the gunners showed to the foe, that it was not until the Prussian Guards were in the Lipa Wood that the 1st Army was able to move out of the cover which had sheltered it for so many hours.

The end of the battle.—The end was now very near, and was only delayed by the Austrian artillery, chiefly of the 6th Corps and the reserve, which was in position between Wsestar and Sweti. A series of cavalry combats, somewhat desultory in their nature although desperately con-

tested, served further to protect the beaten infantry of the 3rd and 10th Corps, which was able to make good its escape. By 4.30 p.m. the whole army, left, centre, and right, was in full retreat; but the pursuit, always held in check by the Austrian guns, which would not acknowledge themselves beaten, was slow, and the Prussian cavalry, which had been held back all through the campaign, was dispersed in comparatively unimportant bodies at the very moment when it might have delivered a crushing blow. Gradually, however, the wings of the victorious army closed in towards the centre, until about 6 p.m. they met across the front of the 1st Army. Wsestar and Sweti fell to the 11th Division, which then advanced in the direction of Briza, while on its right the 2nd Guard Division joined hands with the Army of the Elbe in the wood of Bor. Still the Austrian artillery kept up the fight, and took up a final position between Stezer and Ziegelschlag. Partly owing to its fire, and partly owing to the confusion which was inevitable after twelve hours' marching and fighting, the pursuit at last stopped, but at 8 p.m. Steinmetz came up at the head of the 5th Corps, and was about to hurl his men against Stezer when an order was received from von Moltke which put a stop to the battle.

“ Before Königgrätz,

“ 6.30 p.m. July 3rd, 1866.

“ To-morrow will be a day of rest. The troops will only move so far as is necessary for the comfort or the reformation of the corps.

“ The outposts will be found on the side of Josefstadt by the 2nd Army, on the side of Königgrätz by the 1st Army. General of infantry Herwath von Bittenfeld will with his corps (Army of the Elbe) pursue as far as possible the

enemy's forces which are retreating towards Pardubitz. The Guard Landwehr division¹ will march direct on Chlumetz.

“(Signed) VON MOLTKE.”

There we may leave the victorious Prussians counting their losses and their gains,² while we follow the retreating Austrians in their flight.

The retreat to the Elbe.—Covered to the last by the splendid gunners, the whole army made for the bridges over the Elbe.

For a time the troops managed to preserve some semblance of order, but near the river the few available roads were already choked with baggage. Behind them the sound of the Prussian guns served to hasten the retreat; in front was the haven of Königgrätz, but as the various streams converged towards their refuge, it was found that the gates had been closed and that they were not to be opened. This was the final blow; the bonds of discipline snapped and the retreat became a flight. Guns and wagons were abandoned, natural laws asserted themselves, and few men thought of anything beyond their personal safety. Some hours later the gates of the fortress were opened, and then the masses of fugitives who had gathered in the neighbourhood were passed across to the left bank of the Elbe. For some hours the remnant of the Austrian central corps had been practically defenceless, and the havoc which might have been wrought by masses of cavalry, handled as the Prussians were after Waterloo, is unthinkable.

All through the night the Austrians were gradually

¹ This division had taken no part in the battle, but had reached Nechanitz. Chlumetz, see Map 1.

² More than 150 guns, 5 colours, and about 20,000 prisoners were found to have fallen into the hands of the Prussians.

assembling beyond the Elbe in the direction of Hohenmauth. The 2nd and 4th Corps and the 2nd Light Cavalry Division crossed the river above Königgrätz by the bridges at Placka and Predmeritz, which they destroyed behind them. The shattered 3rd and 10th Corps for the most part found their way into and through Königgrätz, but some units crossed by a bridge a little lower down. On the following days, when order had been more or less restored, the 10th Corps, which had suffered more severely than the rest, was sent by rail to Vienna.

The 6th Corps became very much scattered, and crossed partly above and partly below Königgrätz, some men even finding their way as far south as Pardubitz.

The 1st Corps, after losing forty of its guns, crossed the river at various points between Königgrätz and Pardubitz, but succeeded in concentrating the greater part of its strength at Hohenmauth during the afternoon of the 4th.

The 8th Corps, which had supported the Saxons against the Army of the Elbe, became involved in the general wild confusion of the retreat ; some got away to Königgrätz, others to Pardubitz, and it was not until the evening of the 4th that the corps was reunited at Chrast. (Map 1.)

The Saxon Corps had been ordered to retreat by Placka, but in attempting to do so it found its path barred by the masses of fugitives who were making for Königgrätz. One party succeeded in reaching Placka and crossing there before the bridge was destroyed, but the remainder were diverted southward by mere weight of numbers, and forced away in the direction of Pardubitz, where they too at last found safety.

Thus ended this disastrous day upon which "Moltke, in one pitched battle, succeeding where Gustavus, Turenner Frederick, and even Napoleon failed, overthrew for ever

the military power for Austria.”¹ The future may show that “for ever” is something of an exaggeration, for Austria has already done much to regain her position; but on the 3rd July, 1866, whole regiments vanished, and it is not too much to say that on that day the army which was created by Wallenstein disappeared from among the armed forces of Europe.²

Some comments on the battle. The Prussian artillery.

—It may fairly be said that the battle of Königgrätz was lost and won before a shot had been fired by either side. Von Benedek had been forestalled in his strategic concentration, and had thus been out-mancœuvred. One by one his isolated corps had suffered reverses, and it was a beaten army which stood to fight behind the Bistritz. But for this the rash move which thrust Fransecky and the Prussian 7th Division into the Swiep Wald without support must have meant disaster. It was not that the Austrian 2nd and 4th Corps might have fought better, but that they were not allowed the time in which to finish their work. Had von Benedek’s conception of battle been different the Crown Prince’s army might well have been held at arm’s length for a few hours longer, while Fransecky’s defeat would have been completed.

For this result, had it been achieved, the handling of the Prussian artillery would have been very largely to blame. At this time it was the fashion in all European armies to keep large bodies of artillery in reserve, at the disposal of the corps, or even of the army, commander.

¹ Lord Acton, *Lectures on Modern History*, p. 191.

² The losses on the day were: Prussians, 360 officers, 8812 men killed, wounded, and missing; of these casualties considerably more than half were in the 1st Army. Austrians and Saxons, 1372 officers, 43,500 men killed, wounded, and missing, of whom nearly 20,000 were prisoners.

In 1866 this practice was carried to such an extreme that, not only in this battle, but in the earlier ones as well, the Prussian infantry was deprived of artillery support for hours at a time and that many batteries never came into action at all. After this war the pendulum swung back, and in the years which intervened before 1870 a great change came over the Prussian tactical methods; with the result that the bold and vigorous handling of the guns was perhaps the most noticeable feature of the earlier battles of the war with France, and contributed in no small degree to the German success.

The handling of the cavalry.—It is rather remarkable that no similar change was seen in the handling of the cavalry. It would almost seem as though the numerous opportunities which were missed all through the campaign were overlooked. Yet the tactical weakness of the Prussian armies in this direction was quite as marked in the battle of Königgrätz as was the strategical weakness in the opening phases of the war. Having kept his cavalry back all through the earlier weeks, it might have been expected that von Moltke would make full use of it in the decisive day of battle. For some reason or other this was not so. The various corps were split up, keeping connexion between the armies and playing altogether a very insignificant part. This is the more remarkable since it is a characteristic of the great converging movements, such as von Moltke loved, that the more successful they are the greater must be the confusion of the enveloping infantry on the battlefield. The wings must, almost inevitably, impede the movement of the centre, and find themselves in a position from which pursuit is impossible. This state of affairs seems to render the proper rôle of the cavalry clear enough. It should be kept free to manœuvre, and be given ample scope to operate on the flanks. In

this particular case, the battle of Königgrätz, it is easy for us to see now that the Prussian cavalry, boldly handled, might have seized the crossings over the Elbe below the fortress, and made the victory even more complete than was actually the case.

The task of the Prussian cavalry would have been simplified by von Benedek's faulty dispositions, for his squadrons held back in reserve and ringed round with infantry were practically powerless. Towards the end of the day they sacrificed themselves to save the infantry ; they did something to cover the retreat, but nothing either to secure victory or to ward off defeat.

Curiously enough, the Prussians learnt nothing from the failure of their cavalry in 1866, and in contrast to the artillery, its handling was equally weak in 1870 ; at least in the earlier stages. Since then there have been great changes all over Europe ; changes which will be seen at the very beginning of the next great campaign in Europe, but the result of which it is extraordinarily difficult to foresee.

Von Bonin's delay.—Finally, there is the hesitation of the 1st Corps in coming into action. This was an error of judgment of a kind entirely different from the tactical handling of the various arms, for in hanging back until he had received orders from his army commander, von Bonin committed that which is, in German eyes, the one unforgivable sin. He knew at a very early hour that a battle was impending ; he knew the direction in which his corps would be required ; yet he made no move until 9 a.m. But for this unpardonable delay the 1st Corps would have reached Horenoves well in advance of the Guards, and Fransecky's position in the Swiep Wald would never have become quite so critical as was actually the case.

CHAPTER X

THE PRUSSIAN ADVANCE TO THE DANUBE—PEACE

MAP I

AFTER the battle of Königgrätz all is anti-climax. So hopeless was the condition of the Austrians on the following day, that von Gablenz was sent to the Prussian headquarters to seek for a suspension of hostilities as a preliminary to the conclusion of peace; and on the same night von Benedek, with such of his troops as he had been able to collect, began a retreat in three columns to Olmütz. There, covered by the guns of the fortress, he hoped to restore order in his army in case it might again be necessary to take the field. Even had they wished to do so, the Prussians, bound by their agreement to Italy, were not in a position to grant an armistice, and on the evening of the 4th they began a cautious and leisurely pursuit. The Elbe was found to be unguarded,¹ and it was then clear that von Benedek was not contemplating a fresh trial of strength; but it was only on the 7th that the Prussians learnt that the greater part of the Austrian army had passed through Hohenmauth on the 5th, and that only the cavalry had been left to follow on the 6th. Next day von Gablenz returned to the Prussian head-quarters, which were then at Pardubitz, with further proposals for an armistice,

¹ Since Josefstadt and Königgrätz were still held by their garrisons, the Prussian left column crossed at Pardubitz and the rest of the army lower down the river.

but met with no more success than on the former occasion. That very morning orders had been issued directing the 2nd Army to advance to the line Littau-Konitz, to disturb the reorganization of the hostile army at Olmütz, and to base itself upon the county of Glatz. The 1st Army was to march directly upon Brünn, the capital of Moravia; and the Army of the Elbe was to move on Iglau, whence it could be brought to Brünn or Znaim, as circumstances might demand. Thus one army only was to follow the retreating enemy, while the other two were to advance towards Vienna.

The operations in Italy.—Meanwhile the Austrian statesmen were making one despairing effort to save their capital. From the beginning of the war three corps had been employed in Northern Italy under the Archduke Albrecht, and on the 24th they had gained a considerable success at Custozza over the troops of King Victor Emmanuel, who lost 700 killed, 3000 wounded, and more than 4000 men were reported missing. Curiously enough, the Austrian losses in killed and wounded were still greater, and about 1000 men were taken prisoners by the defeated army. This success in the secondary theatre was, of course, of no account when balanced against the disaster in Bohemia nine days later. The vital point was Vienna, and to protect it the 5th and 9th Austrian Corps were withdrawn from Italy and hurried off to the Danube. At the same time Venetia was offered to Napoleon III. The whole of the Austrian troops were then placed under the Archduke Albrecht, the victor of Custozza, with General von John as the chief of his staff.

The Austrian concentration on the Danube.—The situation when Archduke Albrecht assumed supreme command was one which, in happier circumstances, would have offered considerable scope to an able commander. The

fortress of Olmütz and the lines of the rivers March and Waag afforded a series of suitable positions whence the Army of the North might have threatened the Prussian advance, while the troops which were coming from Italy might have held Vienna. But the whole virtue of a flank position lies in the power of the troops to issue from it, and this power von Benedek no longer possessed. Taking all the circumstances into consideration, the Archduke decided that his best plan would be to bring the Army of the North to the capital, and by the 14th the 3rd, 4th, and 6th Corps had been dispatched from Olmütz by train. Railway communication was then cut by the Prussian cavalry, and the 1st, 2nd, and 8th Corps started to march to the Danube.

It was exactly with a view to preventing this concentration that the Prussian 1st Army and the Army of the Elbe had been pushed forward on the 8th July. Brünn was occupied on the 13th, and there news of the Austrian move reached the Prussian head-quarters on the evening of the 14th. The direct march to the Danube was temporarily suspended, and the 1st Army was directed eastward to bar the road from Olmütz to Vienna. Similar orders had already been issued by the Crown Prince to the 2nd Army, with the result that on the following day, the 15th, an action was fought at Tobitschau, in which the Austrians lost about 2000 men. The total Prussian losses were hardly one-tenth of their adversary's, but the Austrians had gained a start, and were able to reach the Danube at Pressburg. Having failed in their attempt to interpose between the Austrian forces, the Prussians resumed their advance upon Vienna, one corps only being left to watch Olmütz; but in order to allow the flank armies to come into line with the centre, the progress for the next few days was slow. On the 19th orders were

issued for a concentration upon the field of Wagram, but already rumours of peace were rife in the Prussian camps. For a week past M. Benedetti, the French ambassador to Prussia, had been at the King's head-quarters attempting to bring about an understanding, and on the 22nd a five days' armistice was arranged. Before the news could be communicated to the troops a final collision took place near Pressburg, in which the Austrians were once more worsted ; but the action was brought to a conclusion by the arrival of a flag of truce from the Austrian lines.

It was now felt on all sides that peace was but a matter of time, and that the Prussian armies would not be compelled to force their way into Vienna. The five days' armistice was extended to the 2nd August, a four weeks' truce was declared, and the seat of the negotiations was moved to Prag. There in the ancient capital of Bohemia, at the hotel of the Blue Star, the final terms of peace were drawn up and signed on the 23rd August, and within a week the Prussian troops were on their way back to their own country.

So soon as it became clear that Austria could not continue the war all difficulties in the way of an agreement with the minor states were removed. On the 13th August the representatives of Prussia concluded peace with Würtemberg, on the 17th with Baden, and on the 22nd with Bavaria. For a time Saxony stood out, but on the 21st October she too acceded to the Prussian demands.

The terms of peace.—By the terms which she was able to impose upon her enemy Prussia gained everything for which the war had been fought. Austria was compelled to recognize a new organization of Germany in which she was herself to play no part ; she was also to recognize “ the closer federal relations which the King of Prussia shall establish north of the Maine,” and to acquiesce in the

formation of a Southern Confederation which was to be free to negotiate as to its connexion with the Northern Confederation.

Thus the states of Germany were practically formed into one great confederacy, with Prussia as its undisputed head. But there were also other gains : Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, Nassau, and the town of Frankfort were annexed, and Schleswig-Holstein and Lauenburg were subsequently absorbed into Prussia. Seven weeks of warfare and the loss of 10,000 of her sons won for Prussia a place among the great nations of Europe. Jena and its degradation were wiped out ; her territory was increased from 127,000 to 160,000 square miles ; and her population was raised from 19,000,000 to 23,000,000. Thus strengthened, she was able to go forward, her path was clear, and in four years' time she was able to take the step which made her the most powerful nation on the Continent.

APPENDIX I

ORDER OF BATTLE OF THE PRUSSIAN ARMY

Commander-in-Chief : His Majesty the King of Prussia

Chief of the Staff : General von Moltke

Inspector - General of Artillery : Lieut. - General von
Hindersin

Inspector-General of Engineers : Lieut.-General von
Wasserschleben.

1st Army

Commander-in-Chief : H.R.H. Prince Frederick Charles

Chief of the Staff : Lieut.-General von Voigt-Rhetz

<i>2nd Army Corps</i>	Lieut.-General von Schmidt
3rd Division	Lieut.-General von Werder
5th Brigade	Major-General von Januschowski
6th Brigade	Major-General von Winterfeld

Divisional troops—

Pomeranian Rifle Battalion, No. 2

Blucher Hussars, No. 5

Pioneer Battalion, No. 2

Four batteries

4th Division	Lieut.-General von Herwath
7th Brigade	Major-General von Schlabrendorf
8th Brigade	Major-General von Hanneken

Divisional troops—

Pomeranian Uhlans, No. 4

Four batteries

Corps troops—

Four batteries Reserve Artillery

<i>3rd Army Corps</i>	No commander
5th Division	Lieut.-General von Tümping
9th Brigade	Major-General von Schimmelmann
10th Brigade	Major-General von Kamienski
Divisional troops—	
1st Brandenburg Uhlans, No. 3	
3rd Battalion Pioneers	
Four batteries	
6th Division	Lieut.-General von Manstein
11th Brigade	Major-General von Gersdorf
12th Brigade	Major-General von Kotze
Divisional troops—	
Brandenburg Dragoons, No. 2	
3rd Jäger Battalion	
Four batteries	
<i>4th Army Corps</i>	No commander
7th Division	Lieut.-General von Fransecky
13th Brigade	Major-General von Schwarzhoff
14th Brigade	Major-General von Gordon
Divisional troops—	
4th Pioneer Battalion	
Thuringian Uhlans, No. 6	
Four batteries	

Army Troops

Cavalry Corps, 1st Army	H.R.H. Prince Albrecht
1st Cavalry Division	Major-General von Alvensleben
1st Heavy Brigade	Major - General H. R. H. Prince Albrecht
2nd Heavy Brigade	Major-General von Pfuel
1st Light Brigade	Major-General von Rheinbaben
Divisional troops—	
Two horse batteries	

2nd Cavalry Division Major-General Hann von Weyhern
 2nd Light Brigade Major-General Duke William of
 Mecklenburg-Schwerin
 3rd Light Brigade Major-General Count Groeben
 3rd Heavy Brigade Major-General von der Goltz
 Divisional troops—
 Two horse batteries
 Corps troops—
 One horse battery
 Reserve Artillery, 1st Army
 Sixteen batteries

2nd Army

Commander-in-Chief : H.R.H. The Crown Prince of Prussia
 Chief of the Staff : Major-General von Blumenthal

1st Army Corps General von Bonin
 1st Division Lieut.-General von Grossman
 1st Brigade Major-General von Pape
 2nd Brigade Major-General von Barnekow
 Divisional troops—
 Lithuanian Dragoons, No. 1
 1st Jäger Battalion

 2nd Division Lieut.-General von Clausewitz
 3rd Brigade Major-General von Malotki
 4th Brigade Major-General von Buddenbrock
 Divisional troops—
 1st Royal Hussars, No. 1
 1st Pioneer Battalion
 Four batteries

Corps troops—

Reserve Brigade of
Cavalry (including one horse
battery) Colonel von Bredow

Reserve Artillery
Seven batteries

<i>5th Army Corps</i>	<u>General von Steinmetz</u>
9th Division	<u>Major-General von Löwenfeld</u>
17th Brigade	Major-General von Ollech
18th Brigade	Major-General von Horn

Divisional troops—

1st Silesian Dragoons, No. 4
Four batteries

10th Division	Major-General von Kirchbach
19th Brigade	Major-General von Tiedemann
20th Brigade	Major-General Wittich

Divisional troops—

West Prussian Uhlans, No. 1
5th Pioneer Battalion
Four batteries

Corps troops—

Reserve Artillery
Seven batteries

<i>6th Army Corps</i>	<u>General von Mutius</u>
11th Division	<u>Lieut.-General von Zastrow</u>
21st Brigade	<u>Major-General von Hannenfeld</u>
22nd Brigade	<u>Major-General von Hoffmann</u>

Divisional troops—

Silesian Pioneer Battalion
 2nd Silesian Dragoons, No. 8
 Three batteries

12th Division Lieut.-General von Prondzinski
 Composite Brigade Major-General von Kranach

Divisional troops—

2nd Silesian Hussars, No. 6
 6th Jäger Battalion
 Two batteries

Corps troops—

1st Silesian Hussars
 Reserve Artillery
 Five batteries

Guard Corps Prince August of Württemberg

1st Guard Division Lieut.-General Hiller von Gär-
 tringen

1st Brigade Colonel von Obernitz

2nd Brigade Major-General von Alvensleben

Divisional troops—

Hussars of the Guard
 Jägers of the Guard
 Four batteries

2nd Guard Division Lieut.-General von Plonski
 3rd Brigade Major-General von Budritski
 4th Brigade Major-General von Loen

Divisional troops—

3rd Uhlans of the Guard
 Sharpshooter Battalion of the Guard
 Four batteries

Corps Cavalry—

Cuirassier Brigade	Major-General von Schoen
Light Brigade	Major-General von Witzleben
Landwehr Brigade	Major-General von Frankenberg

Army of the ElbeCommander-in-Chief : General Herwath von Bittenfeld

Chief of the Staff : Colonel von Schlotheim

14th Division	Lieut.-General <u>Count Münster</u>
27th Brigade	Major-General von Schwarzkoppen
28th Brigade	Major-General von Hiller

Divisional troops—

Westphalian Dragoons, No. 7
 7th Jäger Battalion
 Two companies 7th Pioneer Battalion
 Four batteries

15th Division	Lieut.-General <u>von Canstein</u>
29th Brigade	Major-General von Strükradt
30th Brigade	Major-General von Glasenapp

Divisional troops—

Royal Hussars, No. 7
 8th Pioneer Battalion
 Four batteries

16th Division	Lieut.-General <u>von Etzel</u>
31st Brigade	Major-General von Schöler, <i>Ad. König</i>
Fusilier Brigade	Colonel Wegerer, <i>Elbe Arm.</i>

Divisional troops—

8th Jäger Battalion
 Two batteries

Army troops—

14th Cavalry

Brigade Major-General Count Goltz

Reserve Cavalry

Brigade Major-General von Kotze

Pomeranian Landwehr Reiter Regiment

One horse battery

Reserve Artillery 7th Corps

Six batteries

Reserve Artillery 8th Corps

Seven batteries

APPENDIX II

ORDER OF BATTLE OF THE AUSTRIAN ARMY IN BOHEMIA

General-in-Chief : Feldzeugmeister Ritter von Benedek

Chief of the Staff : Lieut.-Field-Marshal von Henikstein

Director of Artillery : Lieut. - Field - Marshal Archduke
William

Director of Engineers : Colonel von Pidoll

<i>1st Army Corps</i>	General of Cavalry, Count Clam Gallas
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Commandant of Brigade	Major-General Poschacher
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„	„	Colonel Count Leiningen
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„	„	Major-General Piret
---	---	---------------------

„	„	Major-General Ringelsheim
---	---	---------------------------

Brigade troops with each brigade—

One squadron Nikolaus Hussars

One 4-pr. field battery

Corps troops—

Two 4-pr. field batteries

Two 8-pr. field batteries

Two horse-artillery batteries

One rocket battery

<i>2nd Army Corps</i>	Lieut.-Field-Marshal Count Thun-Hohenstadt
-----------------------	---

Commandant of Brigade	Colonel Thom
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„	„	Major-General Henriquez
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Commandant of Brigade Major-General von Saffran
 „ „ Major-General Duke Wur-
 temberg

Brigade troops with each brigade—
 One squadron Imperial Uhlans
 One 4-pr. field battery

Corps troops—
 Two 4-pr. field batteries
 Two 8-pr. field batteries
 Two horse-artillery field batteries
 One rocket battery

3rd Army Corps Lieut.-Field-Marshal Archduke
 Ernst

Commandant of Brigade Major-General Kalik ¹
 „ „ Major-General Appiano
 „ „ Colonel Benedek
 „ „ Colonel Kirschberg
 „ „ Colonel Prochaska

Brigade troops with each brigade—
 One squadron Count Mensdorf Uhlans
 One 4-pr. battery

Corps troops—
 Two 4-pr. field batteries
 Two 8-pr. field batteries
 Two horse-artillery batteries
 One rocket battery

4th Army Corps Lieut.-Field-Marshal Count
 Festetics

Commandant of Brigade Major-General von Branden-
 stein
 „ „ Colonel Fleischhacker

¹ This brigade was attached to the 1st Army Corps.

Commandant of Brigade	Colonel Poeckh
„	„ Major-General Archduke Joseph

Brigade troops with each brigade—

One squadron 7th Hussars
One 4-pr. field battery

Corps troops—

Two 4-pr. field batteries
Two 8-pr. field batteries
Two horse-artillery batteries
One rocket battery

<i>6th Army Corps</i>	Lieut.-Field-Marshal Baron Ramming
-----------------------	------------------------------------

Commandant of Brigade	Colonel von Waldstätten
„	„ Colonel Hertwegh
„	„ Major-General Rosenweig
„	„ Colonel Jonak

Brigade troops with each brigade—

One squadron 10th Uhlans
One 4-pr. field battery

Corps troops—

One 4-pr. field battery
Two 8-pr. field batteries
Two horse-artillery batteries
One rocket battery

<i>8th Army Corps</i>	Archduke Leopold
-----------------------	------------------

Commandant of Brigade	Colonel Fragnern
„	„ Major-General von Kreyssern
„	„ Colonel Count Röthkirch
„	„ Colonel von Roth

Brigade troops with each brigade—
 One squadron Archduke Charles' Uhlans
 One 4-pr. battery

Corps troops—
 One 4-pr. field battery
 Eight 8-pr. field batteries
 Two horse-artillery batteries
 One rocket battery

<i>10th Army Corps</i>	Lieut.-Field-Marshal von <u>Gablenz</u>
Commandant of Brigade	Colonel Mondel
„ „	Colonel <u>Grivicics</u>
„ „	Major-General von Knebel
„ „	Major-General <u>Wimpffen</u>

Brigade troops with each brigade—
 One squadron 1st Uhlans
 One 4-pr. field battery

Corps troops—
 One 4-pr. field battery
 Two 8-pr. field batteries
 One horse-artillery battery
 One rocket battery

<i>1st Light Cavalry Division</i> ¹	Major-General Baron Edel- sheim
Commandant of Brigade	Colonel Appel
„ „	Colonel Wallis
„ „	Colonel <u>Fratricievics</u>
<i>2nd Light Cavalry Division</i>	Major-General Prince Thurn and Taxis
Commandant of Brigade	Colonel Count Bellegarde
„ „	Major-General Westphalen

¹ One horse-artillery battery was attached to each cavalry brigade.

1st Reserve Division of	}	Lieut.-Field-Marshal Prince
Cavalry		Schleswig-Holstein
Commandant of Brigade		Major-General Prince Solms
„ „ „		Major-General Schindlöcker
2nd Reserve Division of		
Cavalry		Major-General von Zaitsek
Commandant of Brigade		Major-General Boxberg
„ „ „		Colonel Count Soltyk
3rd Reserve Division of		
Cavalry		Major-General Count Coudenhove
Commandant of Brigade		Major-General Prince Windischgrätz
„ „ „		Major-General von Mengen
Reserve Artillery of the Army		Sixteen batteries

APPENDIX III

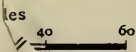
ORDER OF BATTLE OF THE SAXON ARMY CORPS


- Commander-in-Chief : H.R.H. Crown Prince of Saxony
Chief of the Staff : Major-General von Fabrice
Artillery Commander : Major-General Schmalz
- 1st Infantry Division Lieut.-General von Schimpff
2nd Brigade Major-General von Carlowitz
3rd Brigade Colonel von Hake
- Divisional troops—
Two squadrons of 2nd and 3rd Reiter Regiments
One 12-pr. battery
One 6-pr. battery
- 2nd Infantry Division Lieut.-General von Stieglitz
1st Brigade Colonel von Boxberg
4th Brigade Colonel von Hausen
- Divisional troops—
Two squadrons Guard and 1st Reiter Regiments
One 12-pr. battery
One 6-pr. battery
- Cavalry Division Lieut.-General von Fritsch
1st Brigade Lieut.-General Prince George of Saxony
2nd Brigade Major-General von Biedermann
One 12-pr. horse-artillery battery
- Corps troops—
Three 12-pr. batteries
Two 6-pr. batteries
Two companies pioneers
One pontoon detachment

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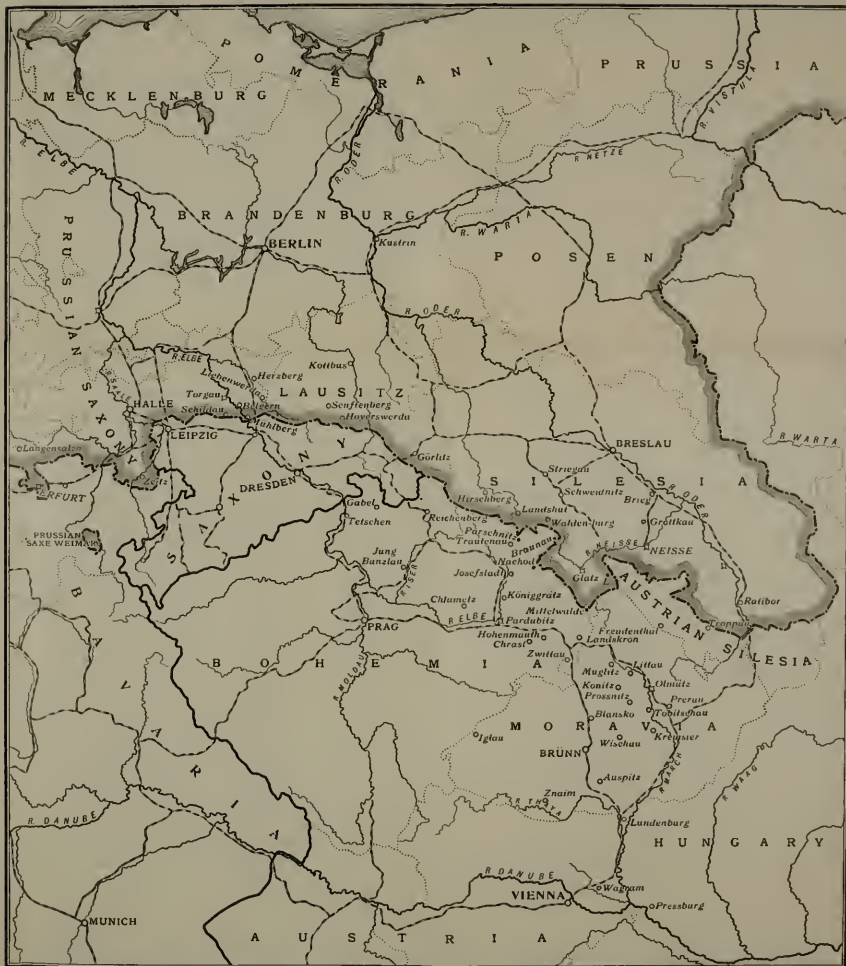
1805 - 1809



SAXON & BAVARIAN FRONTIERS 

GENERAL MAP 1866.

MAP 2



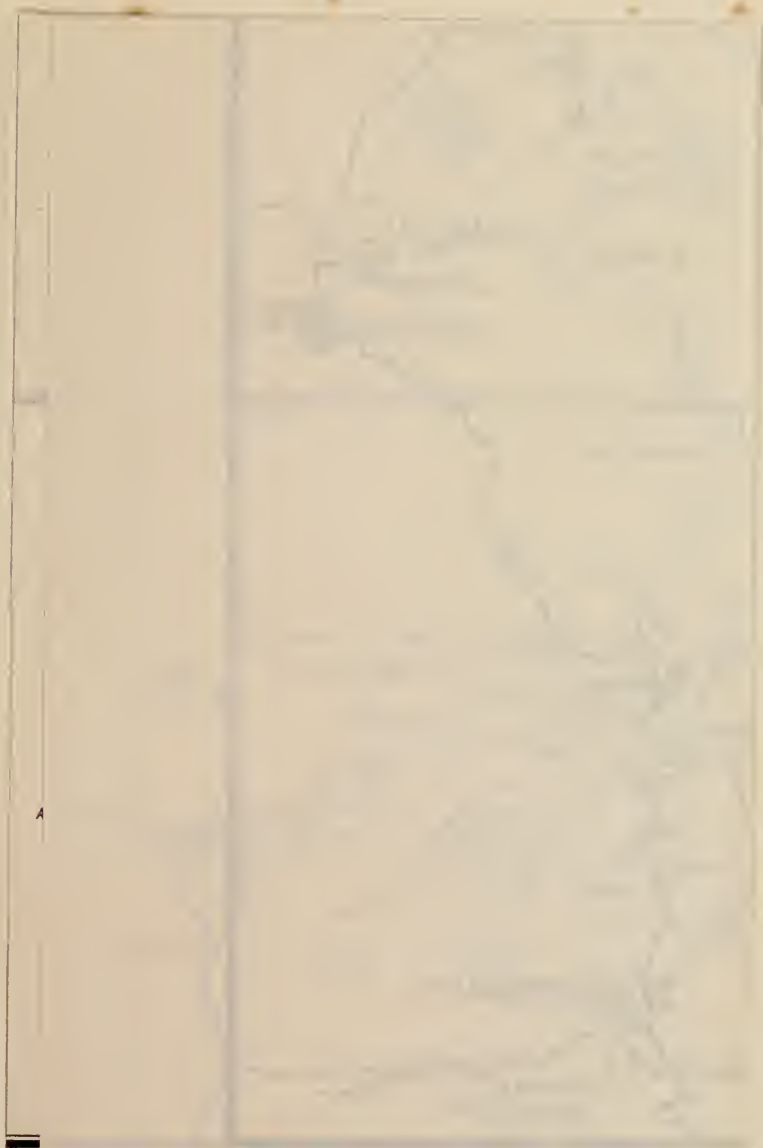
PRUSSIAN FRONTIER

English Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50 60

SAXON & BAVARIAN FRONTIERS







KÖNIGGRÄTZ

July 3rd., 1866-8 a.m.

Austrians & Saxons ■
Prussians. . . □

Götechin

Kamenitz

Ob Praussnitz I.C.

Adv.Gd.I.C.

Rettendorf
Königinhof
1st. Gds.
2nd. Gds.
V.C.

SECOND ARMY

Adv.Gd. 1st.Gds.

MILETIN

HORITZ

JAROMIR
JOSEFSTADT

Milowitz

FIRST ARMY

6th.

5th.

4th.

3rd.

C.C.

S.D.

S.C.D.

8th. Sadowitz

7th. Horenbaues

1st. Sadowitz

2nd. S.D.

1st. S.D.

1st. S.D.

1st. S.D.

Benatek

Wschowitz

Racitz

Horicka Berg

Trutina

Lochenitz

Prochnitz

Placka

Ziegelhlag

KÖNIGGRÄTZ

Pardubitz 12 m.

Holitz 12 m.

Hakenmouthe 25 m.

Olmütz 30 m.

ARMY OF THE ELBE

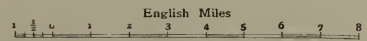
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